TOOLS FOR

TANTRA

HARISH JOHARI

GOD

the Immovable Mover,
the One
behind all events in the cosmos,
is
the still point,
the *bindu*
around which
everything
revolves,
because He is still with peace of love
and yet
dancing eternally
in everything that exists.

His dance is union,
union of elements;
His dance is rhythm,
pulsation of life.
All forms are bound
in a single stream—
a thread, a link
a uniting force—
be they plants, animals, or stars.
The threads *ofgunas* behold the action,
and puppets of *tattvas* eternally dance.

Actions are *karmas,*
Patterns are *samskaras,*
Emotions are *Mudras,*
And the keen desire to reunite
Creates the Dance in the Immovable Mover—

The *bindu.*

Harish Johari
Ananda Ashram
January 18, 1983

Tantra is the study of the universal from the point of view of the individual.

The practicality of Tantric doctrines makes Tantra a select science that links all sciences and uses their essence in preparing workable formulae.

Tantra is not limited to the study of any one branch of the tree of life.

It is the study of the tree of life.

Tools for Tantra

by Harish Johari

Destiny Books
Vermont

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CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS TANTRA?

Tantra is a holistic approach to the study of the universal from the point of view of the individual: the study of the macrocosm through the study of the microcosm. It draws on all the sciences—astronomy, astrology, numerology, physiognomy, physics, chemistry, alchemy, Ayurveda (the traditional medicine of India), psychology, parapsychology, mathematics, geometry, and so on—to provide a practical means of realizing the highest ideals of philosophy in daily life. Instead of separating and categorizing the different areas of human knowledge, Tantra draws them together like beads on one string. The beautiful rosary thus formed is a unique instrument for enhancing the physical, mental, and spiritual life of man and woman.

Put another way, Tantra studies the tree of life itself instead of limiting itself to any single branch of the tree. This tree, this macrocosm, is a great organization of diverse elements, linked together by a unifying law *(dharma)* that is inherent in their very nature. Tantra seeks to understand this law, which has organized the diverse phenomena into the world of relative existence *(maya),* and to use it to promote the evolution of individual consciousness. As stated in the *Kashika Vritti,* "Tantra is that knowledge which expands mind, body, and consciousness."

The aim of Tantra, then, is to expand awareness in all states of consciousness, whether waking state, dream state, or deep sleep. To accomplish this, we need a kind of "deprogramming" and "reprogramming" of our human computer. Our birth in a particular place and time gives us our primary programming, influenced by heredity and

environment. If we are content with the results and live our lives without too many problems, then we will see no need for change. But when we experience great difficulties in life or begin to seek something beyond our limited “program,” then we need away to alter it. Tantra provides the methodology and the tools for this work. It teaches us to identify the various factors that influence our thoughts and feelings and to transcend the obstacles to our evolution arising from ignorance, intolerance, attachment to our animal nature, and selfishness. By refining our thoughts and feelings by means of Tantric practices, we learn to create peace, harmony, and order within ourselves. Tantra thus promotes a one-pointedness and centeredness that help to free the consciousness from limitations.

SHAKTI

People often think of Tantra as a “mother-worshiping” cult. This is not strictly accurate, although Tantra might be called a *shakti*-worshiping cult. Shakti is the universal principle of energy, power, or creativity. This energy is personified as feminine, as Shakti, the Universal Mother. She is inseparable from the one who beholds her—the *shaktiman* (“power-holder”), the masculine principle or Universal Father. Shaktiman is called Brahman by the writers of the Upanishads. In the Tantric tradition he is called Shiva.

The universe is in fact a product of this pair of opposites: one static (shaktiman) and the other dynamic (shakti). The external part of everything is the creative aspect of the dynamic force, and inside every dynamic creation is the static force, which is the nucleus of phenomenal existence.

The play of shakti has no beginning or end. Although it is restless, the energy does move in an orderly cycle, alternating periods of motion and rest. During the period of motion, through permutations and various combinations,

the energy undergoes many changes (*vikriti)* and gets distorted. It reorganizes itself during the period of rest, and thus a continuous process of creation, preservation, and destruction—reorganization and re-creation—goes on forever. Tantra believes that as long as the phenomenal world exists, it is the Universal Mother who is the creator, preserver, and destroyer. Thus she should be worshiped as an aspect of the Divine.

What is the motivating force behind this eternal play that creates the illusory world of phenomena? It is the power of desire *(ichchashakti).* This desire is present in the one who is without attributes, the nameless and formless aspect of the divine (Brahman or Nishkal Brahman). Tantra performs the unique work of studying this principle of desire.

DESIRES AND THE CHAKRAS

Since Tantra accepts desire as the prime motivating force of the universe, it does not ask its aspirants to renounce desire. Other spiritual sciences advise the avoidance of desire, which they claim leads to bondage and is an obstacle to achieving higher consciousness. They try to overcome desire through asceticism or by roasting the seed of desire in the fire of knowledge so that it cannot sprout. Yet one is left with the paradox that to achieve desirelessness, one must have a strong desire—to be desireless!

Tantra asserts that desires are natural and that as long as we are embodied, we will have them. Our sense organs serve as windows through which desires enter. That is, desires are created out of our attachment to sensory input. All desires have a physical basis in innumerable electrochemical impulses. The more we try to suppress them, the stronger they become. Desires activate the secretion of hormones from the endocrine glands. The

concentration of these substances in the blood, arising from the suppression of desire, appears as chemical disturbance or disease.

Desires are directly related to the six psychic centers known as the *chakras.* As the energy in its natural course moves through the different chakras, in concert with the movement of the Earth in the heavens, it energizes the latent desires of those chakras. This makes a person move from one desire to another during the twenty-four-hour cycle of a day. Our physical reality is directly influenced by the force of gravity of the Earth and by the environment created by the celestial bodies and the electromagnetic currents flowing within the planet.

The constant presence of desire arouses a yearning and love for the desired object. A person's psyche is strongly influenced and conditioned by the quality of the object of his or her desire. Most desires center on the physical body and its comforts. People become slaves to their instincts, which constitute the lower part of the personality, and fall prey to agitation, loneliness, excitation, anxiety, dissatisfaction, selfishness, and misery. All religions and sciences that seek to improve human behavior try to combat these problems by advocating the love of abstract principles such as truth, compassion, benevolence, patience, self-sacrifice, disinterested consideration for others, pure affection, endurance, and forgiveness. However, what we need are *practical* methods of applying these principles. Knowledge of such ideals alone cannot make us wise or happy.

Desires do not belong to the self, the individual consciousness; they are related to six of the chakras, and all desires can be classified according to these chakras. The chakras are the playground of the five gross elements—*akasha* (ether or space), air, fire, water, and earth—and their source, the subtle element called *mahat.* To transcend desires, we have to transcend the elements, and this is

possible only through raising the dormant energy (*kundalint*) that lies at the base of the spine.

Table 1 shows the relationship of six chakras with the elements and various desires. The seventh chakra is beyond desire. This is the dwelling place of enlightened beings, the seat of the self or individual consciousness.

REPROGRAMMING THE BRAIN

Normally the energy flows in the lower three chakras, and as long as it flows there, the desires of the lower nature dominate. As Table 1 shows, all worldly desires have their origin in the first three chakras. The modern scientific study of the brain confirms that such worldly desires are associated with the lower brain:

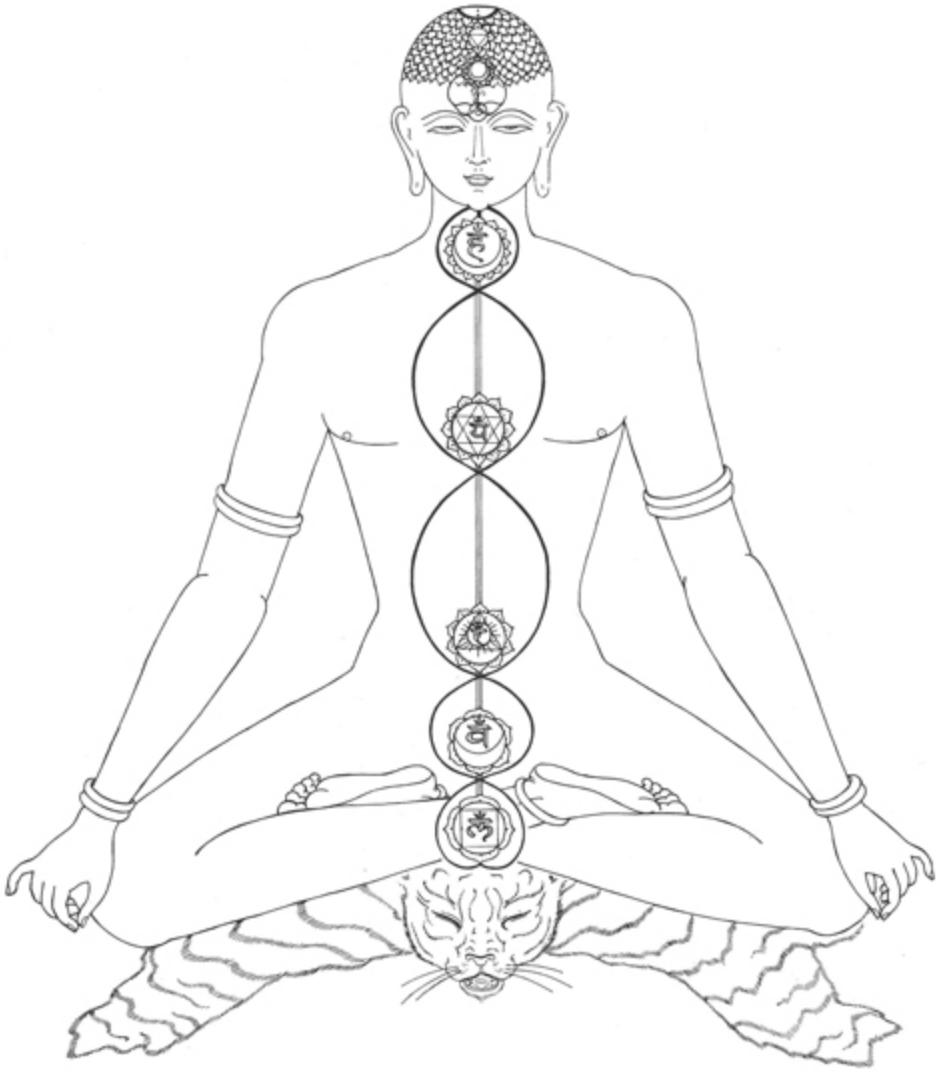
> The brain evolved from the inside out. Deep inside is the oldest part, the brainstem, which conducts the basic biological functions, including the rhythms of life —heartbeat and respiration. According to a provocative insight by Paul Mac-Lean, the higher functions of the brain evolved in three successive stages. Capping the brainstem is the R-complex, the seat of aggression, ritual, territoriality, and social hierarchy, which evolved hundreds of millions of years ago in our reptilian ancestors. Deep inside die skull of every one of us there is something like the brain of a crocodile. Surrounding the R-complex is the limbic system or mammalian brain, which evolved tens of millions of years ago in ancestors who were mammals but not yet Primates. It is a major source of our moods and emotions, of our concern and care for the young.
>
> And finally, on the outside, living in uneasy truce with the more primitive brains beneadi, is the cerebral cortex, which evolved millions of years ago in our

> Primate ancestors. The cerebral cortex, where matter is transformed into consciousness, is the point of embarkation of all our cosmic voyages. Comprising more than two-thirds of the brain mass, it is the realm of both intuition and critical analysis. It is here that we have ideas and inspirations, here that we read and write, here that we do mathematics and compose music.[1]

Tantra offers practical methods of "reprogramming" the brain stem, R-complex, and cerebral cortex. Tantric worship always begins with purification (physical and ritual cleansing), followed by *pranayama* (breathing exercises). Purification creates an electrochemical balance, as I will explain later. Pranayama affects the brain stem, which controls the respiratory function. The aspirant performs certain rituals to energize the area of the R-complex so as to subdue aggression, territoriality, and the sense of social hierarchy. Next comes the exercise of abstract thinking (contemplation), visualization, and *mantra japa* (repetition of a sound, such as a name of the Lord) in sustained tones to influence the cerebral cortex, which is the seat of inspiration. Tantra prescribes all these practices in a systematic order, which happens to be the same order as the evolution of the brain: it begins with the deep inner part (the brain stem) and finds it connected with the psychic centers in the spine.

There are fourteen subtle *nadis* (channels) connecting the psychic centers with the brain stem, of which ten are the most important. The ten nadis are divided into three types of currents—solar, lunar, and fire. The solar nadis are situated on the right side of the spine, the lunar nadis on the left side of the spine, and the fire in the central canal inside the spine. Besides the subtle nadis, there is a network of fine nerves of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems connecting the entire body and its internal

organs with the brain stem. These three currents flow through three principal nadis: *pingala, ida,* and *sushumna.* Sushumna extends from the base of the spine to the cerebral cortex, bifurcating in the area of the R-complex. One branch goes straight to the area of the corpus callosum, while the other branch goes around the optic lobe in the rear side of the skull before reaching the area of the corpus callosum. The two branches, though they reach the same locale, do not actually meet each other. Rather, they both branch out into smaller capillaries that extend into the cerebral cortex. Pingala and ida also start at the base of the spine, like sushumna, but extend only to the area of the R-complex and terminate in the solar nadi (pingala) in the right nostril and the lunar nadi (ida) in the left nostril—but they go through the olfactory lobe, the area of the R-complex. That is why yogis are advised to keep their consciousness in the higher centers of the cerebral cortex, which is the area of inspiration, and so they get established in bliss by the constant practice of Kundalini Yoga.



THE SEVEN CHAKRAS

TABLE 1
RELATIONSHIP OF CHAKRAS WITH ELEMENTS AND DESIRES

Chakra	Element	Desire
1. MULADHARA Pelvic plexus Perineum	earth	being grounded (security), physical comforts, basic biological needs, shelter
2. SVADHISHTHANA Hypogastric plexus Genitals	water	family, procreation, sexual urges, fantasies
3. MANIPURA Solar plexus Navel	fire	immortality, longevity, name, fame, power, authority, acquisition of wealth
4. ANAHATA Cardiac plexus Heart	air	sharing, love, devotion, selfless service, compassion
5. VISHUDDHA Carotid plexus Throat	akasha	knowledge
6. AJNA Pineal plexus "Third eye"	mahat	self-realization, enlightenment

This science of chakras is a unique discovery of Tantra that creates a bridge between matter and mind, body and spirit, the individual and the universal, and presents a holistic system that utilizes the physical for the attainment of spiritual aims. Tantra assumes that all that exists is a product of conscious energy *(parashakti).* Modern scientific investigations confirm that it is in the cerebral cortex that matter is converted into consciousness. That is, "matter," in the form of electromagnetic signals transmitted when the sense organs are stimulated, is registered in the brain as emotions, which influences consciousness. This transformation would not be possible if consciousness were not inherent in the matter itself. In the beginning there is only consciousness. This consciousness is neither male nor

female; it is simply pure consciousness, unenergized. Then the principle of desire enters the picture, energizing the consciousness and separating it into two parts: a static principle and a dynamic principle. The first pair of opposites are interwoven, as illustrated by the Chinese symbol of *yin and yang.* And so begins the game of creation, or *maya* (see Fig. 1).

The creation is not the result of sheer chance; it is governed by laws, and the phenomenal world is a product of cosmos, not chaos. The physical sciences have considered mind to be a by-product of matter, whereas the spiritual sciences believe that mind precedes matter. Both apprehend the truth, only from different standpoints. In the phenomenal world, the unfolding of consciousness starts with antimatter. Mind enters the playground when its tools, the sense organs, are fully formed. *Prana,* the active life force, puts everything in motion. The stopping of prana—and thereby of the mind—brings the play to an end, which is total awareness *(nirbijsamadhi).* Pure consciousness is both the beginning and the end of the game. Truth is always one and the same, whether seen by the physical sciences or by the Vedic or Tantric sages.

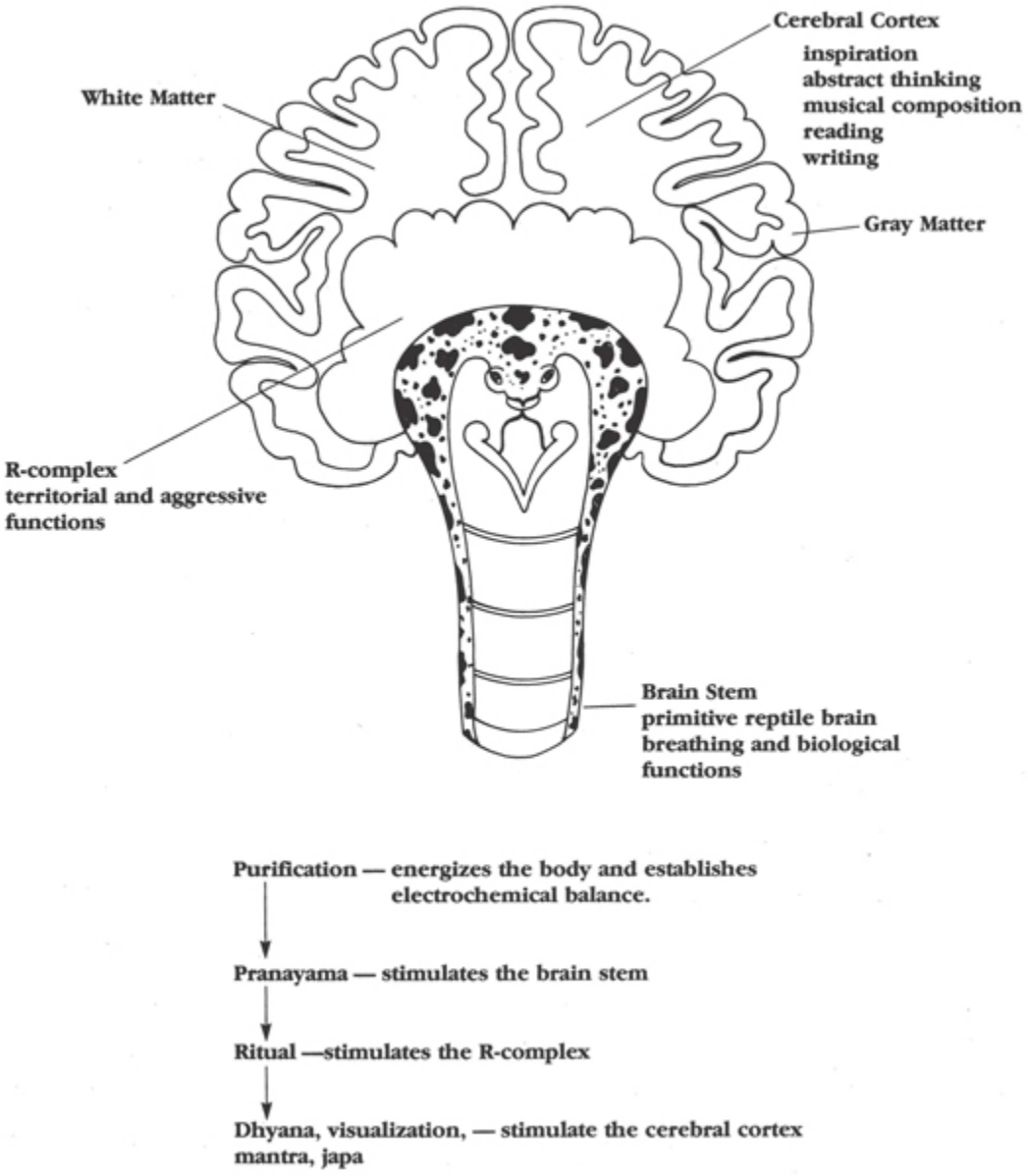


Diagram of the brain, its functions, and its relationship to Tantric practices.

Tantra understands that bad company, love of power, and desire for worldly pleasures and comforts are our greatest enemies in the journey of unfoldment of our divine nature. Worldly desires agitate the mind, and a mind tossed by desire cannot find inspiration and happiness. One has to overcome lassitude, imaginings, fantasies, and egoity. As long as any of these remain unconquered, the higher states

of meditation are hard to obtain. A person is what he or she deeply desires; as you think, so you are.

Tantra is perfectly monistic and believes in one supreme Entity who is inseparable from his Shakti and is always her nucleus. Tantra believes in unity in diversity—and in the continuity of energy, which undergoes many transformations while ever remaining the same.

According to Lama Govinda, this principle of continuity is the basic concept of the Tantric view of life. It extends in both space and time, as each continuous process interacts with innumerable simultaneously existing processes. This is the warp and woof of reality, the infinite interrelationship of everything that exists in the external universe, reflected on a smaller scale in each living organism.

This is the great discovery of Tantra that cuts across all religious dogma and formulation. It represents a spiritual science independent of belief or opinion, ever verifiable by experience because it is based on exact methodology of psychological observation and meditational practices. It creates an atmosphere of certainty and confidence that enables the individual to establish a meaningful relationship to his own inner world and to the world around him.[2]

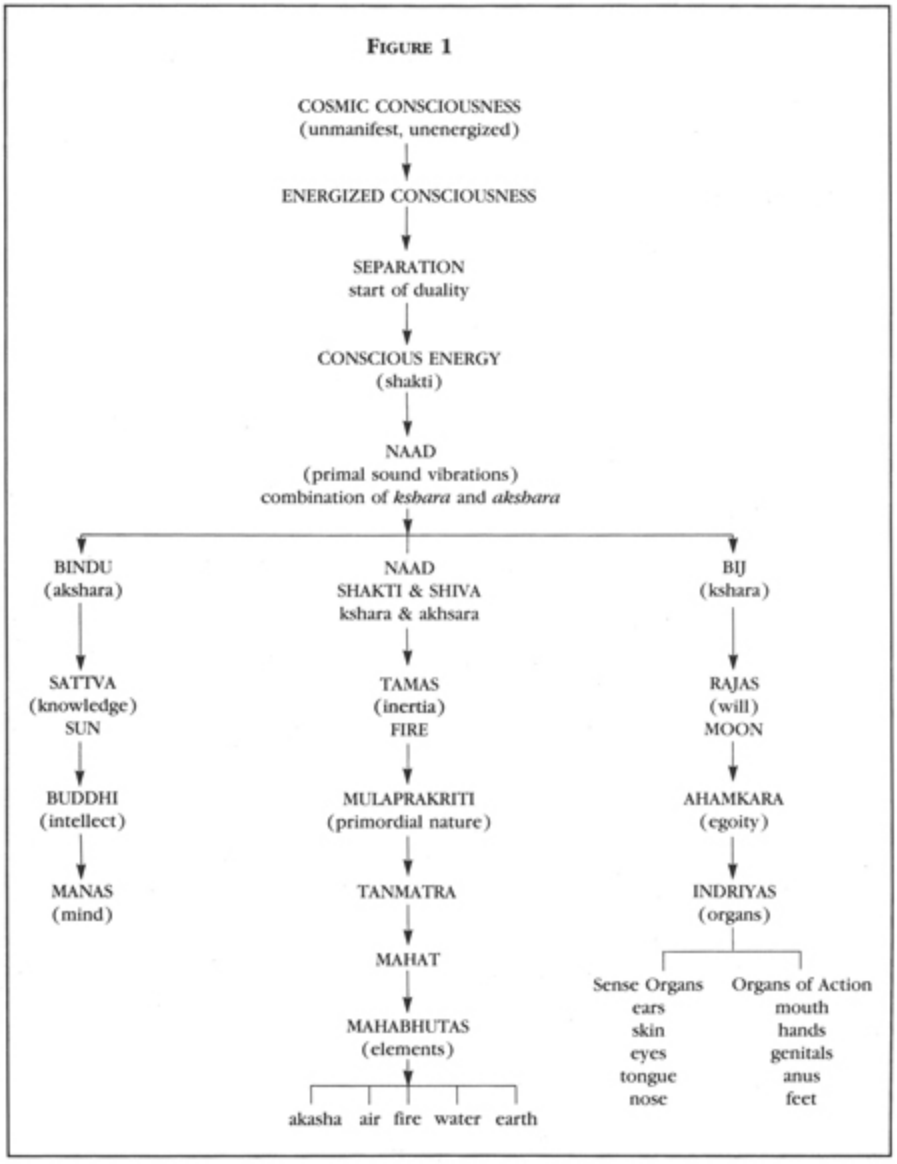
THE WAY TO AWARENESS

Besides the work with the chakras, known as Kundalini Yoga (or Laya Yoga), the science of *yantra* and *mantra* is another important contribution of Tantra. This science entails practices that satisfy desires and establish contact between the individual and the universal: Yantra Yoga and Mantra Yoga can bring one into attunement with the same regulating forces that have created the nature in all its forms, including the structure of our psyche and our capacity to think. Through psychophysical methods, Tantra provides us with an ability to explore our inner nature, our

inner beauty, by creating a witness consciousness, which destroys self-forgetfulness, reveals the slightest fluctuations of mind, and gives us the power to stop these fluctuations and to establish the habit of one-pointedness. By learning to master these regulating forces of nature, the yogis become miracle workers. There could be no miracles without these regulating forces. Like all else, *siddhis,* or powers, are regulated by natural law.

Tantra is the study of the human being's dynamic nature—of our latent potential. It is an outcome of our eternal quest for developing a methodology to achieve self-perfection.

One can achieve a state of total awareness through the following six practices:



1. *Sama:* Mental quietude and subduing of the passions
2. *Dama:* Self-restraint and the subjugation of the five sense organs:
   ears (hearing)
   skin (touch)
   eyes (sight)
   tongue (taste)
   nose (smell)

   and the five organs of action:

mouth (speech)
hands (grasping)
feet (locomotion)
anus (evacuation)
genitals (generation)

and the four internal organs:

ahamkara (egoity)
chitta (memory)
buddhi (understanding)
manas (cognition)

3. *Uparati:* Complete cessation of the perceiving and acting sense faculty
4. *Titiksha:* Endurance, patience (the power to endure, without the slightest discomposure, extremes of heat and cold, joy and sorrow, honor and abuse, loss and gain, and all other pairs of opposites)
5. *Samadhan:* Constant concentration of mind
6. *Shraddha:* True faith, conviction, and devotion

The aspirant should also have the following six qualifications along with the six above-mentioned treasures. Then he or she is fully competent to study Tantra.

1. *Daksha:* Intelligence
2. *Jitendriya:* Control over the senses
3. *Sarva hinsa vinirmukta:* Abstention from violence of all kinds
4. *Sarva prani hitrata:* Concern for universal welfare
5. *Shuchi:* Purity
6. *Astik:* Belief in truth, which is *vidya* (knowledge), Veda (body of knowledge), and God.

These six give one control over one’s animal nature and make one a yogi. The six practices of sama and dama produce coordination between the upper and lower brain during all the three state of consciousness—the waking,

dream, and deep sleep states—and lead one toward the fourth state—the state of extended consciousness known as *turiya.*

CHAPTER TWO

TEMPERAMENT AND TANTRA

The subject matter of Tantra is life and its environment. This life is created by laws and operates through laws. Every living unit, though different from every other individual, is similar in the ingredients that comprise it. The individual differences give rise to a great variety in patterns of behavior. These differences have been understood by different sciences in different ways. A psychologist might describe behavioral patterns in terms of introversion, extroversion, and ambiversion. Endomorph, ectomorph, and mesomorph are the human varieties as described by Sheldon. The Ayurvedic doctor sees people as dominated by *vayu* (wind), *pitta* (bile), or *kapha* (mucus). For seers the important qualities are *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas*—the three *gunas,* or modes of energy, which comprise the primordial nature *(mulprakriti).*

In die unmanifested state the gunas are in a state of equilibrium. When this equilibrium is disturbed, the manifested universe appears. These three modes of energy are actually one appearing in three forms. They are interconvertible. Sattva and tamas are static principles and cannot move by themselves. Rajas is the dynamic principle of activity, and it keeps on converting tamas into sattva and vice versa. The term *sattva* is derived from the Sanskrit root *sat,* which means truth or essence. Rajas is activity, and tamas is the veiling power, the inertia.

In the Tantric view, differences of temperament are influenced by three *bhavas* (emotional states). *Pashu-bhava* (*posh* = lasso, to bind) is the state of consciousness dominated by tamas, dullness, drowsiness, and ignorance.

Virbhava (*vir* = heroic, brave, active) is the state dominated by rajas. *Divya-bhava* is the divine or godlike temperament, in which consciousness is dominated by sattva.

SELF-MASTERY

The quality of one's temperament must be seen before adopting any program of inner evolution. Tantric seers realized that these individual differences create different kind of thinking mechanisms, different body chemistries, and very different ways of reacting to the environment. The aim of the Tantric way is to enhance sattva by adopting disciplines such as simplicity, prayer, devotion, self-analysis, self-study, charity, kindness, regularity, and the *yama* and *niyama* prescribed by the Raja Yoga of Patanjali, which entails truthfulness, faith, nonstealing, nonviolence, cleanliness, celibacy, and so on. A spiritual guide studies his or her students and prescribes the rituals and exercises to suit their individual temperaments. By following these prescriptions, the aspirant gradually experiences a change in moods. Changes in body chemistry are revealed in the types of dreams that one has. To preach a single doctrine to everybody is a mistake. Tantric seers believe the saying *"Munde munde matir bhinna":* "As many heads, so many opinions." Each head is a world in itself, each body a microcosm, yet the same ingredients are present, though in different proportions. The common elements in each individual self are the five elements (akasha, air, fire, water, and earth) and the four internal organs (mind, intellect, memory, and egoity).

The seers of Tantra realized that it is the mind that has the faculty of cognition, and intellect and ego that play games with the mind. A person's own imagination and fantasies are a trap in which he or she gets caught. Physiologically we are composed of opposites—the protons and neutrons at the

atomic level, for example, or the acid-alkaline balance of the body chemistry. These opposites make us experience duality, and we find continuous and constant dialogue going on inside our heads. This dichotomy is due to our basic bipolarity. Tantric practices make use of the chemical nature and temperament of a person to lead him or her to the goal of happiness. This happiness can only be experienced by self-perfection, by mastering the body and mind, by freedom from the mind/body trap. The higher self (in physiological language, the cerebral cortex with its right and left hemispheres) and the lower self (the lower brain, spinal cord, medulla oblongata, and brain stem) need to be practically managed by a method that will work at all levels at the same time.

Our greatest trap is our identification with the body and temperament. We treat our subjective reality as ultimate reality and forget that the frame of reference through which we understand reality is the limited "I," not our real self. According to Lama Govinda, mistaking the momentary focus for a permanent and independently existing unity or an autonomous "I" fixes the consciousness in a one-sided position and becomes an obstacle. However, as a relative point of reference that establishes a relationship between past and present, the "I," the perpetually self-creating inner center, is an essential element in the structure of consciousness that is aware of itself and the world in which it lives.[3]

Tantra tries to rectify this mistake by making us conscious of unity in diversity, by creating rituals to eliminate the egoity that this "I" gives. Through surrender to Guru and to God in the form of Guru, through following a system and creating an order in life, and through spiritual experience, this false notion of "me and mine" versus "you and yours" falls away. By spiritual experience, one enters into the fourth state of consciousness, turiya. This state is achieved when the energy enters the sushumna, the central passageway for

the coiled-up dormant energy, kundalini. In a spiritual experience die body undergoes many electrochemical and hormonal changes. These physiological changes alter the programming of the computer of the mind and create awareness. Without real spiritual experience, the nondual state cannot be established. According to Lord Buddha in the *Dhammapa-da,* there are nine impediments of the mind: sickness, incompetence, doubt, delusion, sloth, nonabstention, erroneous conception, nonattainment of any yogic state, and instability in a yogic state. Amity toward the happy, compassion toward the miserable, goodwill toward the virtuous, and indifference toward the vicious make the mind serene. He says: “All sorrow can be cured through good conduct, reverential faith, enthusiasm, remembrance, concentration, and correct knowledge.” Tantra Yoga prescribes the six treasures described in Chapter 1 (sama, damas, uparati, titiksha, samadhan, and shraddha) which help us overcome the nine impediments of mind and achieve the merits that bring spiritual experience.

THE RIGHT AND LEFT BRAINS

Human consciousness is the product of the brain, and the human brain is the highest product of consciousness in the phenomenal world. As mentioned earlier, the brain has two parts: the lower and the upper brain. The lower brain consists of the primitive reptilian brain and the R-complex. The upper brain has also two parts: the right and the left hemispheres. Here in this pair of opposites lies the cause of all dichotomy in man. The right hemisphere is mainly responsible for pattern recognition, intuition, sensitivity, and creative insights. It is the feminine side. The left hemisphere governs rational, analytical, critical thinking. It is die masculine side. These two opposite forces do not work in

coordination except when thinking is combined with a motor response.

The study of the functions of the two hemispheres will aid in the understanding of yantras and mantras as tools of Tantra. Table 2 shows the abilities of each as revealed by dichotic tests performed in the early 1950s.

ARDH-NARISHWARA

Ardh-narishwara, hermaphroditic deity incorporating male (Shiva) and female (Shakti) qualities, symbolic of the bipolarity of the human body. In Tantra, the right side of the body is considered male and the left side female. This is true for both men and women.

This information revealed by science was long ago grasped intuitively by the Tantrics, who learned to work with the dichotomy of the brain and the dual nature caused by the lower and upper brain. The lower brain is very obstinate and does not want to change. The upper brain is very open and accepts change readily, if convinced on both sides—that is, both rationally and emotionally. The emotional side is even more powerful. Even though a rational explanation may not be available, if the emotional side is convinced, it feels satisfied. But even when the upper brain accepts something, it is not easy to persuade the lower brain to ignore its biological needs and desires. It follows the language of DNA, the genetic code. Yoga enables one to transcend the limitations of the genetic code.

The seers of Tantra had to invent methods and rituals that would tame the reptile brain, because they observed within themselves a constant struggle between the lower and upper brain. They were not as precise as neurologists, but because they were seers of truth, they saw that a strict methodology was the only solution to this continuing problem of duality. They were not aware of the functional specialization of the two hemispheres, but they knew that human beings are both verbal and visual. They described this dual nature in terms of the principle of *namarupa,* name and form. The persistence of memory, verbal or visual, constantly creates negative and positive emotions, and the poor human being, nature's best creation, is tossed between depression and inspiration. The only solution is union *(yoga)* of the lower and upper brain and of the right and left sides of the cerebral cortex.

TABLE 2
BEHAVIOR ASSOCIATED WITH THE RIGHT AND LEFT HEMISPHERES

Left Hemisphere	Right Hemisphere
Speech, writing, and abstract thinking, power of conversation increases, vocabulary becomes richer and varied	Nonverbal memory, emotions, and concrete thinking.
Likes discussions.	Sharply diminished capacity for speech.
Answers questions in more detailed manner and the answers are more extensive.	Difficulty in recalling names of objects in daily use, although the objects are recognized.
Becomes excessively talkative.	Uses short, simple sentences.
Becomes more receptive to what others say.	Answers are given by mime and gestures instead of words.
Is untouched by intonations of sound or emotions behind sounds.	Difficulty in conversing.
Is unable to distinguish between male and female sounds.	Silence and inattentiveness to speech.
Is unable to pair patterns.	Hearing of loud sounds only; distinction between moods and intonations remains.
Powers of grasp or recognition lessen.	Can distinguish between male and female sounds.
Imagination and perception become defective.	Nonverbal sounds are heard; recognizes tones and tunes but no words.
Long-term memory remains.	Deterioration in verbal perception and selective improvement in all aspects of imaginai perception.
Short-term memory decreases.	Can easily select pairs of colors; is quick to evaluate unfinished drawings and identify defects.
Is unable to recognize winter and summer.	Loss of theoretical knowledge (school education).
Visual disturbance.	Shapes and figures are easily recognized and dealt with.
Is easygoing, sociable, cheerful, optimistic.	Loss of orientation in space.
	Shapes and figures are easily recognized and dealt with.
	Loss of orientation in space.
	Loss of orientation in time.
	Is morose, pessimistic.

SWARA YOGA: THE SCIENCE OF THE NOSTRILS

The Tantric seers were not puritanical and did not believe in inhibiting or prohibiting certain acts of physiological origin. They knew that moral values would be automatically incorporated into life once energy started to flow into the upper chakras. All physical needs and desires are normal because they are created by the five elements, which constitute the phenomenal world. Without going beyond the five elements, which govern the first five chakras, it is impossible to avoid worldly desires, and without establishing oneself in the highest chakra beyond the gunas, it is impossible to avoid mental fluctuations. For this one has to rouse the dormant energy sleeping in the *muladhara,* the first chakra. When the kundalini rises with enough force, there is a combustion of positive and negative ions as it passes through and "pierces" the six chakras. Through this piercing of the six chakras one can achieve tranquillity of mind. By understanding the nature of the elements and *constantly* watching their presence and dominance, one can work with the elements.

Swara Yoga, the science of the nostrils, provides a practical method to use with the right and left hemispheres of the cerebral cortex at will. Swara Yoga tells us that we do not breathe through both nostrils at the same time; one nostril or the other is always dominant, just as one hemisphere is always dominant. Researchers who have studied circadian rhythm say that the nostrils alternate in dominance every two hours (in children every hour). According to experts of Swara Yoga, however, this change should be every hour. Recently it has been found that there is a connection between the nostrils and the hemispheres of the brain. That is, when one nostril is dominant, the opposite hemisphere is also dominant. The nostrils thus provide us with an important and practical key to tune our behavior

according to the energy available in our body. They establish our relationship with the sun and the moon.

The nostrils obey the sun in that they change about half an hour before sunrise. The same nostril that starts the day also ends the day, at sunset.

The nostrils also correspond to the planets. The right nostril, which is masculine (solar) and connected with the left hemisphere, is connected with the solar planets: the sun, Mars, and Saturn. On Sunday, Tuesday, and Saturday the right nostril works with the ruling planet of the day for one hour; half an hour before sunrise it changes and the nostril of the day takes over.

The left nostril, which is feminine (lunar) and connected with the right hemisphere, is associated with the lunar planets: the moon, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus. Every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday the left nostril works with the ruling planet of the day for about one hour, and half an hour before sunrise it changes and the nostril of the day starts operating.

The nostrils are directly related to the lunar cycles: in the ascending phase the lunar nostril dominates, and in the descending phase the solar nostril dominates. In the ascending moon cycle the left nostril starts the day for nine days out of the fifteen days of the cycle; only on six days does the day start with the right nostril. Similarly, in the descending moon cycle the right nostril starts the day for nine days out of fifteen. There is a particular order in this system, and the nostrils alternate in the same way. On the moon dates 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15 of the ascending cycle, the left nostril is dominant, and on dates 4, 5, 6 and 10, 11, 12 of the ascending cycle, the day starts with the right nostril. On moon dates 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15 of the descending cycle, the day starts with the right nostril, and on moon dates 4, 5, 6 and 10, 11, 12 of the descending cycle, the day starts with the left nostril. For convenience we count 15 days in the ascending cycle and 15 days in the

descending cycle, making it a 30-day cycle. But these days are lunar and not solar. The moon takes only 28 ½ days to complete its one revolution around the Earth. Our understanding of a day is based on the 24-hour cycle in which the Earth completes one rotation on its axis. The different speeds of Earth and the moon create a rather complicated pattern, and not every moon date corresponds with the sunrise point on which our dates are based. For the last nine years the Sri Center International has been publishing a “prana calendar” showing which nostril should be working on which day at dawn. This science of Swara Yoga gives a way to check our rhythm every fortnight. Every dawn following the full-moon night, the descending moon cycle starts, and at the time of dawn the right nostril starts the day. It goes for almost three lunar days, and then the left nostril operates for three days. Similarly, the ascending moon cycle starts following the night of new moon, and at the time of dawn the left nostril operates for three days and then alternates with the right nostril every three lunar days. Thirty lunar days are equivalent to 28½ solar days.

It is possible that the nostril of the day may start ten minutes before or after sunrise or half an hour before or after—or it may not operate at all. It all depends on one’s individual body chemistry. But such variation is an indication that the body rhythms are not working with the moon, and as a result some kind of physiological or psychological problem maya rise. If one’s nostril is not properly synchronized, one should wait up to half an hour after sunrise and then change the nostril.

How to Change the Nostril

To determine which nostril is dominant, exhale through the nose onto a mirror or windowpane. The moisture pattern thus produced will show which nostril is open. With practice,

one can also detect a cold sensation in the operating nostril during inhalation.

To change the operating nostril, one can use either of two easy methods: (1) Lie down on the same side as the operating nostril. Put a small cushion under the armpit and press it with your body weight. Or (2) sit down calmly and gaze toward the same side as the nostril that is not operating. The first method is more effective, and everybody can practice it to change his or her nostril. Swara yogis can change the nostril at will.

Why and When to Change the Nostril

The operating nostril should be changed only if:

1. The nostril of the day is not the same as the operating nostril
2. There is to be a change in activity
3. A sign of disease or psychological disorder is first noticed
4. One nostril keeps operating for more than two hours

Each nostril is associated with particular actions that can be done best when that particular nostril is working. (See Table 3.) The following points have to be understood:

1. The body is divided in two equal halves: the solar, male right side and the lunar, female left side.
2. The right nostril is connected with the right side of the body, and the left nostril is connected with the left side of the body.
3. The right side of the body and the right nostril are connected with the left hemisphere of the cerebral cortex, and the left nostril and left side of the body are connected with the right hemisphere.
4. All activities that require physical strength are right-nostril jobs, and all activities that require emotional strength are left-nostril jobs.

5. The dominance of the right nostril during the night and of the left nostril during the day makes one healthy, wealthy, and wise and increases longevity.
6. One nostril should not work for more than two hours in a row, except for those who are practicing Swara Yoga and like to keep their left nostril operating during the day and right nostril during the night as stated above.
7. The normal breathing rate should not be more than fifteen breaths per minute. Thus, one should breathe 21,600 times in 24 hours. According to Tantra the human life span is measured not in years but in number of breaths, and if one lives in accordance with the laws of Swara Yoga, one will be able to live a happy, healthy, inspired life of up to 120 years—a total of 933,120,000 breaths.

TABLE 3
ACTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE NOSTRILS

Left Nostril	Right Nostril
Peaceful actions	Hard actions
Activities to strengthen body, vitality, or energy	Handling weapons
Friendship	Teaching war
Yoga	Music
Meditation	Driving a vehicle
Using divine medicines	Exercise
Alchemy	Boating
Wearing new clothes	Making a *yantra* or practicing Tantra
Wearing new ornaments and jewelry	Climbing (on a mountain or fort)
Sexual intercourse (for women)	Sexual intercourse (for men)
Giving charity	Fighting, dueling, boxing, wrestling
Entering an ashram for spiritual or inner growth	Buying and selling animals and birds
Building a new house	Sculpting, cutting, chiseling, carpentry
Constructing a pond, swimming pool, well, etc.	Hatha Yoga, hard yogic disciplines

Planting, gardening	Meeting government officials
Conference	Discussion, debate, pleading
Starting a new colony	Approaching someone
Making a long journey toward south or west	Applying for a temporary job
Drinking water	Bathing
Urinating	Eating and defecating
Returning home	Writing letters or books
	Leaving home

The solar (right) nostril is called pingala and is bile-dominated. The lunar (left) nostril is called ida and is mucus-dominated. When both right and left nostrils are working, they are called sushumna and are wind-dominated.

In connection with the science of chakras (Laya Yoga), we have said a little about the three principal nadis—pingala, ida, and sushumna—and have mentioned that ida and pingala originate at the base of the spine and terminate in their respective left and right nostrils, but sushumna covers the whole area, from the base of the spine to the top of the corpus callosum. In Swara Yoga we get a very clear understanding of these three principal nadis. Ida is most active with the operation of the left nostril, pingala with the operation of the right nostril, and sushumna when both nostrils operate simultaneously.

Sushumna automatically operates at dawn or dusk, when the nostril connected with the planets stops and the nostril of the day takes over. Even if the nostril of the planet is the same as the nostril of the day, sushumna starts working at the time of sunrise. (If the body chemistry is disturbed, there could be a fluctuation of half an hour maximum before or after sunrise.) For example, on Monday one hour before dawn, the moon rules that hour of the day and the left nostril should be operating; but if it also happens to be moon date 1, 2, 3, or 7, 8, 9, or 13, 14, 15 in the ascending cycle, the left nostril should operate at dawn to start the day and

at dusk to finish the day. Even then, in a healthy person or child, sushumna should operate at the time of dawn and dusk.

Sushumna also operates for about ten breaths during the time when one nostril is changing over to the other nostril. This is called *sandhikal*—"joining time." Sushumna is not good for worldly activities. Plans made in sushumna never get fulfilled. All work begun in sushumna is spoiled. Sushumna is meant only for calming the system to prepare it for the change. But it is the best nadi for Yoga and meditation. In HathaYoga alternate-nostril breathing is practiced to open sushumna and is prescribed for five minutes before starting meditation.

Swara Yoga enables us to properly utilize the energies of the ida, pingala, and sushumna, and to switch our hemispheres at will so as to use their energy in the desired manner. Without this knowledge, all other yogas and sciences are incomplete. The nostrils are like a steering wheel directing us in the journey of life.

Swara Yoga also teaches us techniques to observe the presence of the five elements in the body. These elements come and go in each cycle of breath, that is, in each hourly cycle of the right and left nostril. Every hour we change from one nostril to the other. Earth is the starting point. The beginning of each cycle of nostril is with the earth element, then comes water, fire, air, and akasha. After akasha the nostril changes. This way sushumna operates always in *akashatattva (tattva* = element). In one hour we breath 900 breaths (60 × 15 = 900):

For 20 minutes (300 breaths), earth dominates.
For 16 minutes (240 breaths), water dominates.
For 12 minutes (180 breaths), fire dominates.
For 8 minutes (120 breaths), air dominates.
For 4 minutes (60 breaths), akasha dominates.

In 60 minutes (900 breaths), all the elements come and go.

Of the 60 akasha breaths, the last 10 are the ones in which the transition takes place, before the other nostril takes over. It is during this transition that sushumna operates. At sunrise and sunset it operates for a longer duration, which can be prolonged by meditating at those hours of the day. This was one of the reasons why the seers of the Vedas, Upanishads, and Tantra prescribed worship for the times of dawn and dusk.

These elements, as shown in Table 1 in Chapter 1, are produced by gradual changes in energy and form the basic octave of *prakriti* (primordial nature), and are the basic material of the entire phenomenal existence. They also form physical reality and our psychological responses—the stimulus and the reaction to the stimulus.

In the science of chakras we have seen that the chakras are just a playground for the elements: the real players are the elements. Yogic scriptures assert that true knowledge of the self is not possible without becoming *tattvatit* (going beyond elements). They also say one should become *tattva-darshi*—an observer of the elements—because all physiological and psychological changes arise from the mutation of the gunas (sattva, rajas, tamas) and the tattvas (akasha, air, fire, water, and earth). Swara Yoga provides a practical key to observe the presence of the tattvas.

Table 4 gives a brief introduction to this system of observing the tattvas so as to become *tattva-gyani* (knower of elements). Out of tattvas the phenomenal world begins, and into tattvas it merges before it goes to its subtle aspect. The shape of tattva, indicating which element is predominating in the person’s system at that moment, can be seen by breathing out on a piece of mirror or glass: the vapor deposit forms the shapes given in the table. The color can be seen by doing *yoni mutdra* (closing the ears with the

thumbs, the eyes with the index fingers, the nostrils with the middle fingers, and the lips with the ring and little fingers). The taste can be felt in the mouth. (Smokers cannot sense the taste so easily because of the taste of tobacco in their mouth. One should clean and rinse the mouth before doing yoni mudra.)

Tantra uses tattvas as tools for spiritual evolution and also as a means of understanding one's own desires, needs, and psychological makeup. In their gross form, the tattvas combine with each other to create the phenomenal world. In their subtle form they provide nourishment to the internal organs. Earth nourishes the physical body, the muscles, bones, and hair. Water nourishes the bodily fluids, such as blood and lymph. Fire nourishes the digestive fire, *ojas.* Air nourishes prana, the circulatory system, endocrine glands, nerves, and skin. Akasha nourishes the ears, semen, and brain.

Moods *(rasas)* sometimes create a chemical disturbance in the body (if we remain for a long time in one of the nine classically known rasas and breathe from the same nostril for a longer duration). This disturbs the cyclic order of tattvas, and the tattva of the mood predominates. For example, anger increases fire; this also disturbs the three humors: wind, bile, and mucus. The three humors are the elements in a different form. The combination of earth and water produces mucus. The element of fire produces bile. The element of air produces wind.

The persistence of a particular mood creates psychophysical ailments. One who keeps a constant watch on his *tattvas* can stop the persistence of a mood by concentrating on the sound of the breath, which is SOHAM —"I am that." This sound, SOHAM, is called *ajapa,* indicating that *the japa* (repetition) is not done orally or mentally; it is happening with the inhalation and exhalation of the breath itself. This ajapa or SOHAM is used as a tool in Tantra. In fact,

there are seven other ajapas besides SOHAM that are going on in the body, and it has been said:

TABLE 4
The Tattvas (Elements)

Tattva	Attribute	Nature	Desire
Akasha	ego (*ahamkar*)	void (*sunya*)	Solitude
Air	sex	restless	activity, movement
Fire	anger	hot-headed	achievement
Water	attachment	cool	meeting
Earth	greed	stable	survival

Activity	Shape	Color	Taste
thoughts, ideas		violet	bitter, quininelike
any job or task	oval	smoky green	astringent
labor	triangle	red	pungent, bitter, hot
peace	crescent	white	salty
collecting, saving	square	yellow	sweet

In *muladahara chakra* the breath is doing *ajapa* of Ganesh for 600 breaths.
In *svadhishthana chakra* the breath is doing *ajapa* of Vishnu for 6,000 breaths.
In *manipura chakra* the breath is doing *ajapa* of Rudra for 6,000 breaths.
In *anahata chakra* the breath is doing *ajapa* of Shiva for 6,000 breaths.

In *vishuddha chakra* the breath is doing *ajapa* of Panchvaktra Shiva for 1,000 breaths.
In *ajna chakra* the breath is doing *ajapa* of Ardhnarishwara for 1,000 breaths.
In *sahasrar chakra* the breath is doing *ajapa* of the guru for 1,000 breaths.

The total numbers of these ajapas is 21,600, which is the number of breaths in a 24-hour cycle of the day.

It is impossible to devote each breath to keeping track of the ajapa in different chakras, but by working with SOHAM ajapa it is possible to a certain extent, and one should try to listen to this sound in one's own breath. Sound SO at inhalation *(purak)* and HAM at exhalation *(rechak).*

The two most powerful tools of Tantra are mantra and yantra, discussed in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

MANTRA: THE AUDITORY TOOL

A mantra is composed of psychically potent sound syllables that are capable of influencing the human system. They can excite the emotions and give suggestions to the mind. They affect both the one who chants them and the one who hears them.

The word *mantra* comes from the Sanskrit *mantrana,* which means advice or suggestion. In a sense, every word is a mantra. In our daily life we use words to get everything done, obtain everything we need. Each mantra or word is a sound pattern that suggests to the mind the meanings inherent in it, and the mind immediately responds.

Besides being a sound pattern associated with some meaning, a mantra is also energy composed of certain frequencies that have a pattern of their own and a vibrational field that creates different intonations. These frequencies and the sympathetic overtones generated by them influence our sympathetic and parasympathetic nerves, which are spread in a fine network around our internal organs. The sympathetic response generates the neuromotor response and influences the two hemispheres of the cerebral cortex, as shown in Figure 2.

THE EFFECT OF MANTRA

Mantra practice involves the left hemisphere and is therefore effective in increasing positive emotions. The intonation and melody, which are the essential parts of mantra, remove negative emotions. In association with a yantra—a diagram or picture of a deity—the mantra also provides the right

hemisphere with a concrete image of the object of emotional attachment.

It is the left hemisphere that has raised humanity to a position of supreme eminence. In a very broad sense animals can be said to have two right hemispheres. In animals there is no distinction between right-hand and left-hand functions, except in apes and monkeys, which automatically perform complex motor actions with the right hand. This distinction of right-hand and left-hand functions and the dominance of the right hand led to asymmetry in the hemispheres of the human brain. In animals both hemispheres work in symmetry, so the distinction between the two hemispheres does not exist. The distinctiveness of the left hemisphere is a development that emerged with the appearance of verbal communication in human beings.

Thus it is clear that mantras affect the emotional self. Spiritual sounds may be poems, chants, prayers, or hymns—all create emotional frequencies and open new dimensions in our consciousness. Chanting is conducive to positive emotions; the meanings inherent in the sounds and words of chants excite the memory and the psychic centers and cause the entire nervous system to vibrate. Chanting mantras or devotional songs in the early-morning hours sets a rhythmic pattern for the whole day.

According to Ramana Maharshi, repetition of mantra, with attention directed to the source of the sound, completely engages the mind. This is Tapas (penance). The source is not the vocal organs alone, but also the idea of the sound in the mind, whose source is self.[4]

Thus the practice of mantra is more than a suggestion, a bit of advice, or an idea. It is a means of getting in touch with our self.

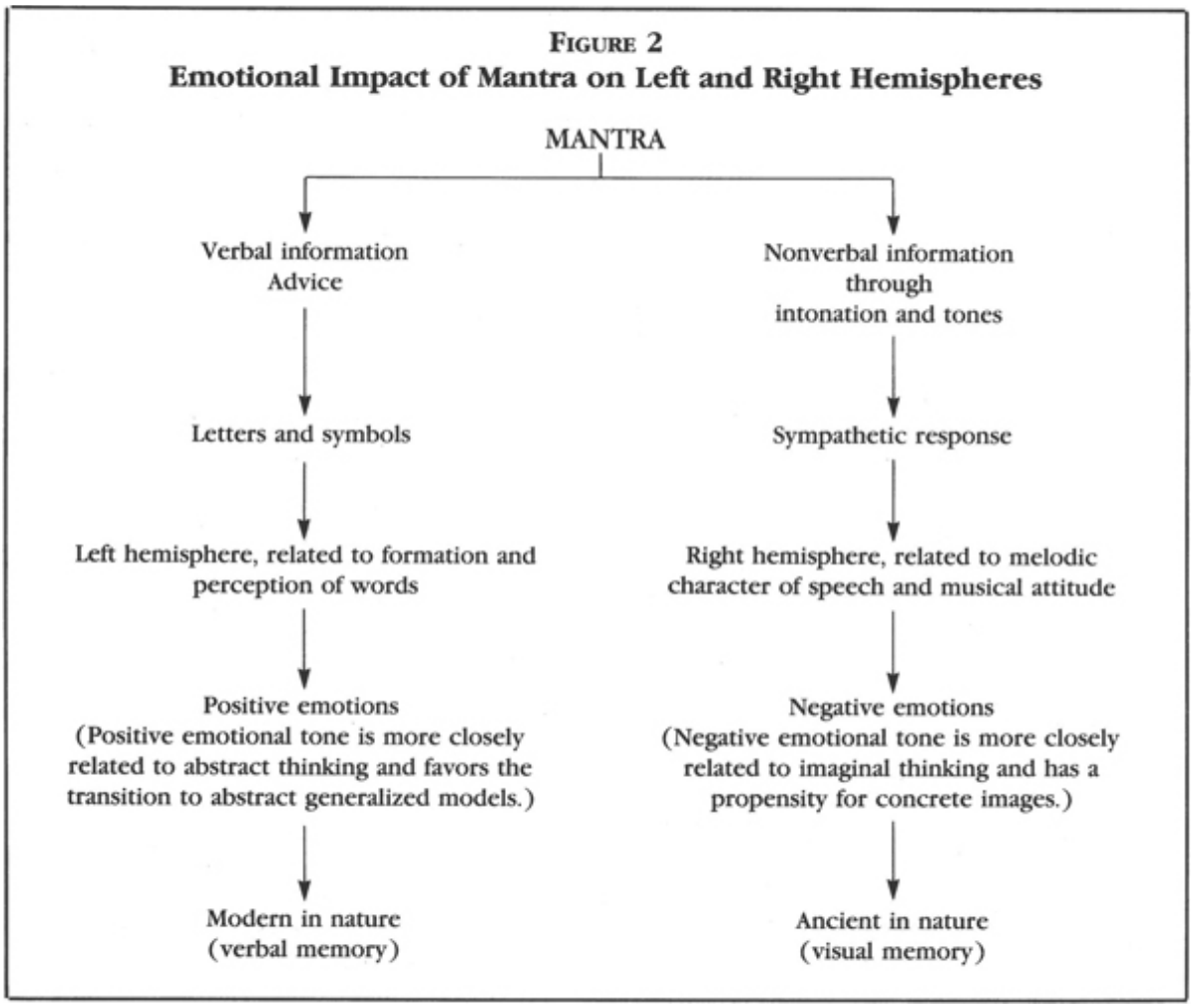


FIGURE 2
Emotional Impact of Mantra on Left and Right Hemispheres
MANTRA
Verbal information
Advice
Nonverbal information
through
intonation and tones
Letters and symbols
Sympathetic response
Left hemisphere, related to formation and perception of words
Right hemisphere, related to melodic character of speech and musical attitude
Positive emotions
(Positive emotional tone is more closely related to abstract thinking and favors the transition to abstract generalized models.)
Negative emotions
(Negative emotional tone is more closely related to imaginal thinking and has a propensity for concrete images.)
Modern in nature
(verbal memory)
Ancient in nature
(visual memory)

THE ORIGIN OF MANTRA

The mantras we know were heard by yogis and Vedic seers in their meditations *(samadhi).* They were not created in a normal state of consciousness as art and literature, but were heard in a higher state of consciousness (turiya). Writers, poets, composers, and artists experience an altered state of consciousness during creative activity that is much different from their ordinary state. This altered state is one of deep concentration but is not meditation. The ancient yogis and seers *(rishis)* practiced a way of life that put them in a constant state of awareness, directing their energy toward the highest chakra, in a tranquil state of mind, inspired by

divine love. In that state, being completely absorbed in their essence, they heard these sound compositions, and when they returned to normal consciousness, they chanted them from memory. Later these mantras were collected and compiled as Vedas by the four disciples of the sage Vyasa.

Put another way, the origin of mantras is divine. The rishis only heard them as *richas,* sound frequencies in an organized form. Because they were produced by a higher consciousness, they transport anyone who practices them to the same space from which they originated. These mantras are called *shrutis,* which refers both to frequencies and to the sound that is heard.

Later seers and visionaries who were artists, poets, and musicians also created mantras, which are found in the scriptures created by them. These scriptures are called the Shastras, Upanishads, and Smriti and other scriptures come under this second category. These mantras are of several types:

1. Mantras that explain Truth
2. Mantras that advise
3. Mantras that promote a certain emotional state
4. Healing mantras

Tantra has a vast collection of these four categories of mantras. In Tantra, mantra is used as a tool, and its origin is in the *desire* to communicate, to manifest, invoke, materialize, excite emotions, heal, raise the level of consciousness, energize, inspire, and the like.

According to Tantra, all mantras are forms of consciousness (*vigyan-rupa*), and when a mantra is fully practiced, it fully enlivens the *samskara* (accumulated experience of all past lives), and the meanings of the mantra appear to the mind. The essence of a mantra is to concentrate and vitalize thought and willpower. Tantrics believe that *will opens the way to faith and faith creates*

miracles. The magic of mantra therefore is not so much in the intonation or melody itself as in faith (true *bhakti*).

VARIETIES OF MANTRA

Mantras may be used for religious worship, for japa, for healing, to help spiritual evolution, for purification, for making offerings, and so forth. There is a difference between Vedic mantras and Tantric mantras. Tantra is called the fifth Veda and is supposed to be the Veda of our present age, the Kali Yuga. Some mantras are only chants or expressions of nearness to the Divine. But some saints who were inspired by divine love and unshakable faith used these chants as mantras or tools in their own spiritual practice, and their followers afterward started using those mantras, calling them *mahamantras,* or great mantras. An example of such a mantra well known in the West is a chant that was used by Shri Chaitanya and is now spreading rapidly through his devotees around the world:

HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE
HARE KRSNA HARE KRSNA KRSNA KRSNA HARE HARE

Pronunciation, which is an important part of intonation, plays an essential role in the recitation of a mantra, apart from the melody. But pronunciation changes from country to country and place to place, as do melodies. Thus, it is primarily faith that creates the effect of mantra.

In addition to pronunciation and melody, the beat cycle in which mantra is chanted, whether silently or aloud, plays an important role. The beat cycle is the rhythmic pattern inherent in the melody, but it changes according to the state of consciousness of the one who is chanting. An increase in the speed of the chanting increases the speed of mind, heartbeat, and respiration. The beat cycle affects the emotions. A fast speed sometimes creates a continuous

vibration, and if the chanting is done by a group, it creates a good effect, because the mind works in synchronization with the beat cycle and has no time to fantasize. Thus the minds of people who are very restless get absorbed in chanting and relax. Slowing the beat cycle also creates the same continuous vibration, but it slows down the speed of mind, heart, and breath. In brief, the difference between the two speeds is this:

- Fast chanting exhausts the mind, heart, and breath, and relaxation comes after the chanting is over.
- Slow chanting relaxes the mind, heart, and breath while the chanting is going on, but it is good only when the chanting is done individually.

TABLE 5
THE TEN KARMAS OF MANTRAS

1. SHANTI (PEACEFUL) KARMA: Mantras that free one from diseases, psychological problems, fear, illusions, and worldly and environmental troubles; and mantras done without any desire for reward, power, or attachment.
2. ISTAMBHAN (PARALYZING) KARMA: Mantras used to stop the movement of any living thing or inanimate object in nature.
3. MOHAN (ATTRACTING) KARMA: Mantras used to attract a man, woman, or animal. Mesmerism and hypnotism come under this category. Also known as SAMMOHAN.
4. UCHCHATAN: Mantras used to disturb the mental equilibrium of any living being. Such a mantra increases doubt, uncertainty, fear, and delusion, and the person influenced by it starts acting as if possessed.

5. VASHIKARAN: Mantras used to enslave somebody. The one on whom the mantra is used loses his own discrimination and will and becomes like a puppet. *Vashikaran* means controlling the consciousness of the one on whom the mantra is used. (*Vash* = control, *karan* = doing.)
6. AKARSHAN: Mantras used to attract somebody who is living at a distant place.
7. JRAMBHAN: Mantras used to change behavioral pattern, so mat the one on whom the mantra is used starts acting the way the one using the mantra wants.
8. VIDWESHAN: Mantras used to create opposition between two individuals. This kind of mantra creates anger, hatred, jealousy, and aggression in both individuals toward each other. With others their behavior remains as usual; it only changes with the one whom the user of the mantra chooses, and the result is animosity.
9. MARAN: Mantras used to kill somebody. This kind of use of mantra brings instanteous death without any physical ailment or disorder.
10. PUSHTI KARMA: Mantras used to increase one's own or another's wealth, name, fame, goodwill, social status, power, etc. Also known as PAUSTIK.

A medium-speed beat cycle is good for group and individual chanting. It does not disturb the heartbeat or breathing pattern, and makes the mind more awake, alert, and conscious.

Chanting slowly induces a hypnagogic state. Sound creates akasha, which creates sympathetic overtones, and these overtones influence the total nervous system. More akasha is produced when sound echoes as if it were coming

out of a hollow bamboo. The echoing quality of sound increases with the increase of akasha in sound.

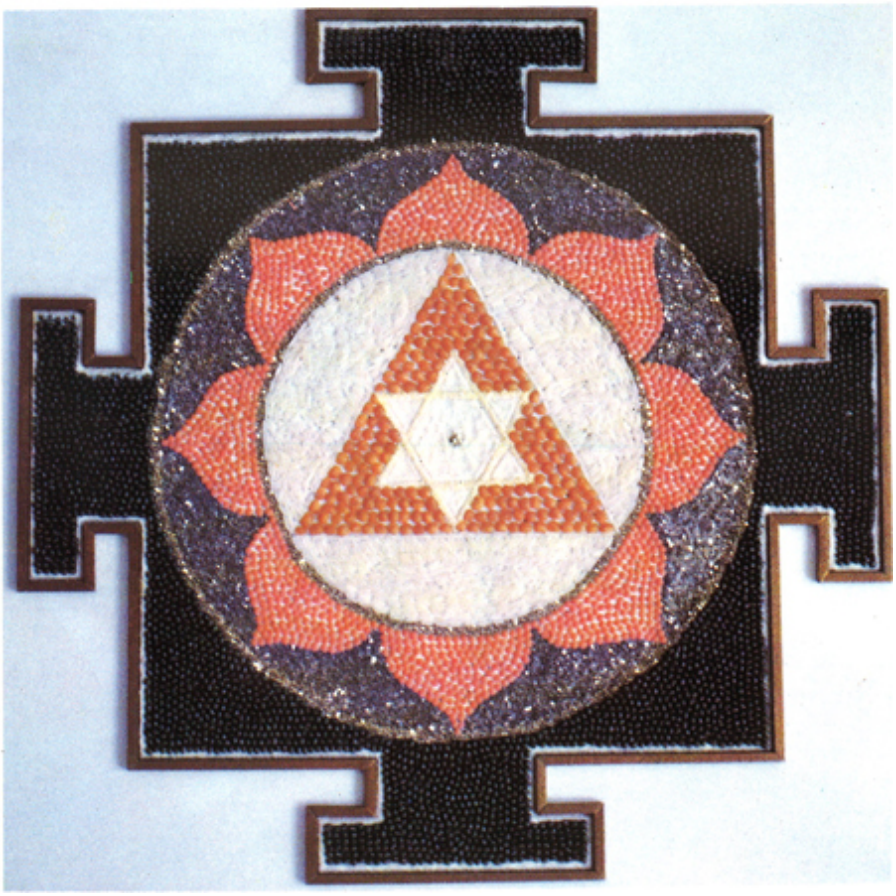
The place from which the sound emanates influences its tonal quality. Although the sound cannot be produced without the vocal cords, they are not the place of origin of sound. Deep tones are produced by the vocal cords in conjunction with the abdominal region, middle tones in conjunction with the heart region, and high-pitched tones in conjunction with the upper region of the body. Indian classical music, which is based on the chants of early temple ceremonies, uses all three places in a gradual order. The chanters start with the abdominal region and go up to the upper region (the head), but the middle region (chest, heart, and throat) is used the most and produces a greater emotional impact on the listeners. Mantra chanting increases willpower, the power of concentration, and positive emotions —and these three create faith in a mantra, which is one of the forms of the deity. This faith leads to the magical effects of mantra.

Plate 1

JAPA SARASWATI

Saraswati, goddess of knowledge, music, and the fine arts. Japa drawing composed of the deity’s name, written in colored ink, used as a centering device. Repeating the name as a mantra while writing it increases the power of the japa drawing.

Plate 2



Examples of yantras made of beans, rice, and colored stones. Yantras are sometimes stitched, beaded, or woven and, for certain rituals, made out of grains and colored flours.

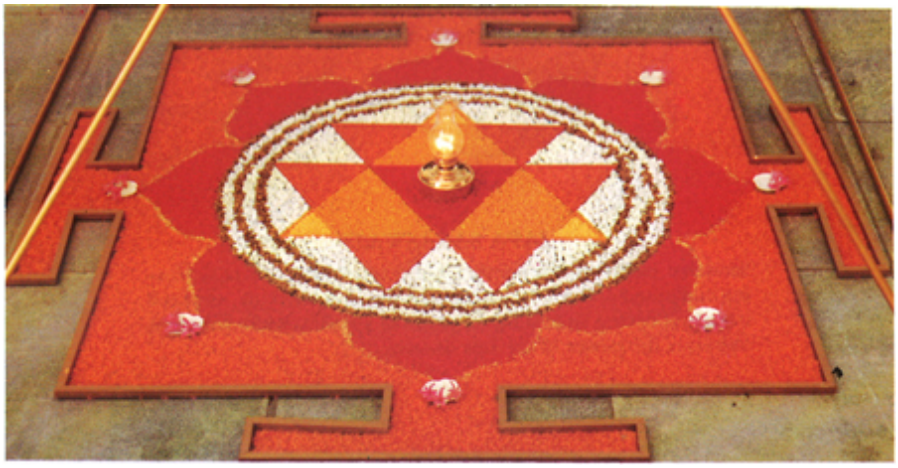
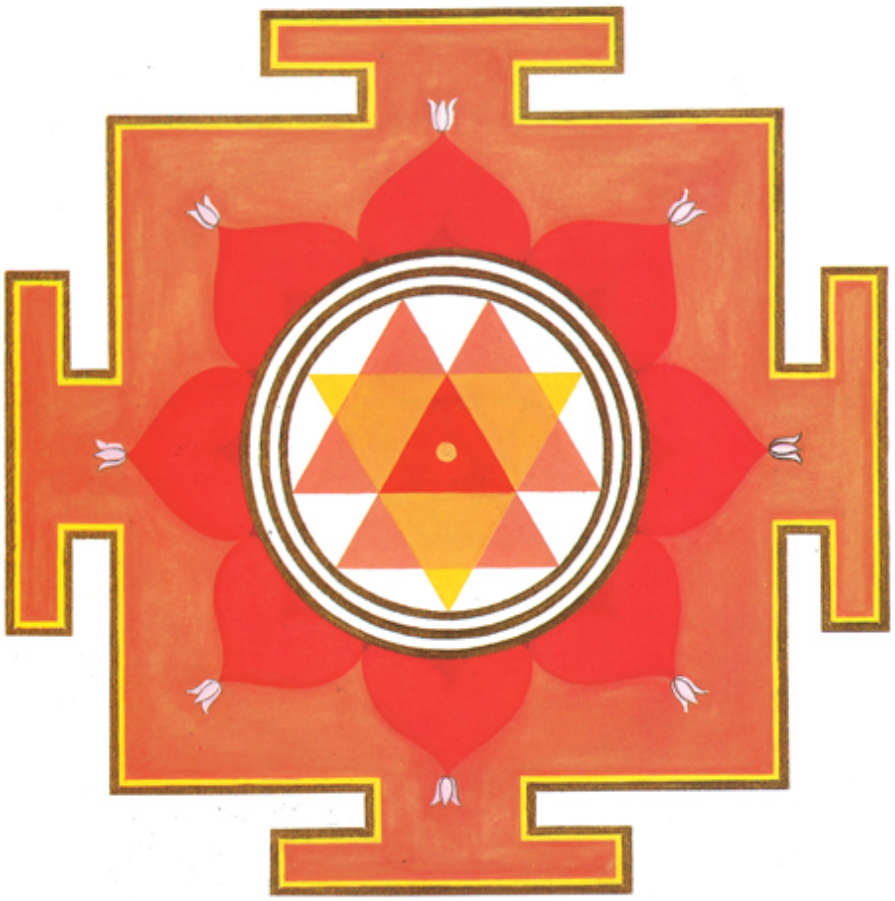


Plate 3

GANESHA

गणेश यन्त्र

Plate 4



DURGA

दुर्गा यन्त्र

ATTITUDE OF THE ASPIRANT

The attitude of an aspirant *(sadhak)* plays an important role in mantra *sadhana.*

Mantra is energy. It can be used for either good or bad purposes. The entire responsibility rests with the sadhak. If the sadhak practices mantra japa for personal spiritual growth, it helps him or her to evolve, but if a mantra is done to help others, it serves a double purpose: it helps both the others and the sadhak who does it. If the mantra is used to harm anybody, then it also harms the one who is using it.

(There are also mantras that can protect one from harm, discussed later in this chapter.)

Tantra teaches all the uses of mantras. For example, if I were to teach you about fire, I would tell you not only how it can cook your food and warm you, but also how it can burn and destroy. It is then up to you to know the purpose for which you are using fire. A good person will use it for a good purpose, and a malicious person will use it for harming others. Fire is independent of what is done with it. Fire is just energy, neither good nor bad in itself. It gives heat, and this heat can be used in any way we choose.

In Tantra there are ten categories of actions *(karmas)* that a mantra can accomplish (see Table 5). These ten categories cover all aspects of human desires, good and bad, and include all the ways that mantra can be used. The intentions of the sadhak are his or her responsibility. One must thus be clear about why one picks up this tool of mantra. Good and bad karmas are categorized according to the effect they create inside and outside the individual. Whatever one does, one has to be responsible for that. By doing good or bad to others, one earns the same in return. Tantra agrees completely with the saying "As you sow, so shall you reap."

The ten karmas of a mantra cannot be performed anytime and anywhere. There are special times of the year, lunar dates, and days for each kind of work (see Table 6). Using these mantras at the suitable times and dates gives them their power. Natural forces are available during these periods for attaining magical effects from the japa of these mantras. Within the months mentioned in the table, there are a few lunar dates that are more suitable than others for doing the japa (see Table 7).

TABLE 6
SEASONS SUITABLE FOR THE TEN KARMAS OF MANTRAS

Karma of Mantra	Suitable Hindi Month
AKARSHAN	CHAITRA & VAISAKH (March & April)
VASHIKARAN	
JRAMBHAN	
MOHAN	
VIDWESHAN	JAISHTH & ASHADH (May & June)
UCHCHATAN	
ISTAMBHAN	SHRAVAN & BHADRAPAD (July & August)
MARAN	ASHWIN & KARTIK (September & October)
SHANTI	MARGSHIR & PAUSH (November & December)
PUSHTI	MAGH & PHALGUN (January & February)

TABLE 7
DATES AND DAYS SUITABLE FOR THE TEN KARMAS

Karma	Hindi Months	Lunar Dates (Days of the ascending or descending cycle)	Days of the Week
SHANTI	All months, especially MARGSHIR & PAUSH (November & December)	Ekadashi (11th day) Full moon	every day, especially lunar days—Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and (best of all) Friday
ISTAMBHAN	SHRAVAN & BHADRAPAD (July & August)	Pariva (1st day) Chaturthi (4th day) Chaturdashi (14th day)	every day, especially lunar days—Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and (best of all) Friday
MOHAN	CHAITRA & VAISAKH (March & April)	Ashthmi (8th day) Navmi (9th day)	Monday
UCHCHATAN	JAISHTH & ASHADH (May & June)	Dwij (2nd day) Shashthi (6th day)	Friday
VASHIKARAN	CHAITRA & VAISAKH (March & April)	Saptami (7th day)	Wednesday
AKARSHAN	CHAITRA & VAISAKH (May & April)	Tritiya (3rd day) Triyodashi (13th day)	Saturday
JRAMBHAN	CHAITRA & VAISAKH (March & April)	Tritiya (3rd day) Triyodashi (13th day)	Thursday
VIDWESHAN	JAISHTH & ASHADH (May & June)	Dwitiya (2nd day) Shashthi (6th day)	Thursday
MARAN	ASHWIN & KARTIK (September & October)	Panchmi (5th day) Ekadashi (11th day) Dwadashi (12th day)	Tuesday
PUSHTI	MAGH & PHALGUN (January & February)	Ekadashi (11th day) Full moon	Sunday

Prerequisites of Mantra Sadhana

1. **Guru: spiritual guide**
2. **Diksha: initiation**
3. **Abhishek: special rites of eight types, given by teacher to student as part of initiation**

Requisites of Mantra Sadhana

1. **Samkalpa: firm determination**
2. **Dridh Iccha Shakti: strong willpower**
3. **Astha: faith**
4. **Shuchita: purity**
5. **Ekagrita: one-pointedness**
6. **Asana: postures**

7. **Pranayama: breathing techniques**
8. **Mala: rosary**
9. **Dhyana meditation**
10. **Japa: repetition of a mantra**
11. **Homa: fire worship**
12. **Dhairya: patience**

SUITABLE PLACES FOR MANTRA SADHANA

Place and directions play an important role in mantra sadhana. Temperature and pressure (altitude) are the factors that make one place better than another. For the best results, one should try to understand this distinction before starting mantra japa. Some places are charged with magnetic energy and are rich in pranic energy (negative ions). Some places, though not geographically situated in the "power belt," are still charged with more powerful energy because of any of the following reasons:

- Some high soul has done sadhana there.
- The one who is practicing mantra has some emotional attachment to the place.
- It is a natural environment.

The sages have praised these environments for mantra sadhana:

- Flower gardens
- Lonely places
- The depths of a thick forest
- A land where there has been no war
- The meeting place of two rivers
- Holy places
- Caves in the mountains
- The shadow of a peepal, banyan, or vat tree
- A cave under the root of a bilva tree
- Amid basilicum bushes

- On the bank of a river
- Near a pond or spring

The presence of a cow, a brahmin, a stream, a ghee lamp, the sun, the moon, or the guru enhances the power of mantra japa.

Japa done sitting in a river or stream up to the navel also is very effective.

ASANA (Seat)

The word *asana* as used here refers not to a posture but to the material used for sitting. A person doing mantra sadhana should not use an asana that has been used by somebody else, unless that person is the teacher, a holy man, or one who is spiritually evolved and to whom the sadhak has an emotional attachment.

Ordinarily the following are prescribed as good asanas:

- Mats made of kusha grass
- Deerskin
- Tiger skin
- Woolen rugs
- Silk sheet
- Wooden table

The main reasons for using these materials is that all are poor conductors of heat and electricity. Thus the energy that the sadhak generates during sadhana will not be lost by escaping into the ground. Even then Tantra clearly states the use of an asana in accordance with the purpose of mantra sadhana. Cotton asanas need to be washed and dried; therefore, cotton is not considered as pure and is sometimes prohibited. Asanas made of bamboo, stone, earth, rotten wood, leaves, and grass needles are prohibited for sadhana.

Kusha

Kushasana (asana made of kusha grass) is supposed to be very auspicious and can be used for any kind of mantra japa or worship. Kusha has been praised in the *Rigveda* and *Yajurveda.* The effects of kushasana are as follows:

1. Purifies *antahkaran* (the four internal organs): mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), being (chitta), and ego (ahamkara)
2. Helps in attaining desired goal
3. Helps in purification and enhances mental and physical health
4. Cleans impurities of the place and environment
5. Conserves energy of the aspirant

Deerskin

The skin of a black deer gives siddhis (special powers), liberates the aspirant from bondage, and ensures that the aspirant is never short of money.

Any kind of deerskin or antelope skin helps in:

- Subjugation of the senses
- Sublimation of sensuality
- Achieving realization or a state of total awareness
- Acquisition of spiritual powers
- Curing disease caused by aggravation of mind and curing bile and blood diseases
- Increasing individual magnetism

Tiger or Leopard Skin

Tiger or leopard skin is suitable only for aspirants of rajasic (dominated by rajas) temperament. It brings luxuries suitable for a king, creates anger, and keeps the aspirant away from snakes, scorpions, and other insects. It protects the aspirant from environmental disturbances and obstacles.

It is also purifying, like kusha or deerskin, and helps tame the tiger of the mind through the subjugation of the senses.

Wool Rugs and Silk Sheets

Wool and silk help in the attainment of desired objects. A red wool asana is especially beneficial in attaining objects of desire. These materials also conserve the individual's energy and purify the mind.

JAPA

Repeating a mantra with or without a counting device is known as japa. It is a practice used by aspirants of all religions—Jews, Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Zoroastrians—as a powerful tool to control the mind. They all believe that an idle mind is the devil's workshop, and they accomplish practical work on themselves by doing prayers or japa, often with a rosary. In Tantra, japa is used with some additional tools to make its effects more positive, durable, and powerful.

In Tantric japa one repeats a mantra for a prescribed number of times. After about nine-tenths of the total are done, one is supposed to do a *homa* (fire worship). The remaining mantras should be done while offering ghee (clarified butter) or *samagri* (a combination of thirty-six herbs) or black sesame seeds (or any other material as prescribed by the Shastras) to the fire or to the Guru. Each time the mantra is repeated, an offering to the fire *(ahuti)* is made, thus completing the remaining one-tenth of the mantra. Another approach is to repeat the prescribed number of japa first and then to perform homa, giving one-tenth of the prescribed number of offerings to the fire. When the japa is done without any desire, it needs no fire worship.

Japa can be done:

1. With a mantra (with or without AUM at the beginning and end)
2. With the name of a deity
3. With *bijas* or bija mantras *(bija* = seed)
4. Aloud
5. Silently

Silent japa, known as *upanshu japa,* is supposed to be more powerful than japa said aloud. An easy way to exercise silent japa is to perform japa aloud for a period of time so that the ears will hear the mantra and the brain will register it. The aspirant should keep on decreasing the volume of the sound, using deep tones (bass sounds), and should gradually start doing it silently. This method is effective because the cerebral cortex will keep on repeating the mantra for a period of time even after the audible japa has stopped. The speed of japa should remain uniform, and it should be done in sustained tones.

Written japa is a powerful variation of silent japa. It entails writing the name of the deity on paper, birch bark, or leaves from a banyan tree, peepal tree, banana tree, or mango tree. If writing on birch bark or mango, banana, or banyan leaves, the aspirant should use a pen made from the branch of a pomegranate tree or of a banyan tree. The ink should be made from *gorochan,* from red sandalwood paste, or from saffron, or a combination of two or all three of these. Written japa creates a habit of silent japa and is supposed to be ten times more powerful.

Written japa can be made more powerful if the mantra of the name of the deity composes a picture of the deity. The use of different colors can make it more aesthetic and powerful. See color plate 1.

USING A MALA

In doing japa with a *mala,* one should observe the following guidelines:

1. The mala should be used by the *right hand* (only one hand should be used).
2. The index finger and the little finger should not touch the beads.
3. The beads should be held by the middle finger and the ring finger and should be turned with the help of the thumb.
4. There is always an extra bead hanging outside the row of beads, whose total number is usually 108. This 109th bead is called *sumeru.*
5. The sumeru bead should never be passed. It thus becomes like a static point in the mala.
6. The aspirant should start the mala at the first bead next to sumeru and should end on the last bead before sumeru.
7. If the aspirant has to do the mala twice, he should turn the mala and make the last bead (the one at which he ended his first round of mala) become the first bead for starting the second round of the mala.

If the japa is prescribed for numerous times (sometimes it is prescribed for one or three or five or seven or nine or eleven times), one should count with the help of the required number of rice grains. After doing each mala, one removes a single grain of rice from the total number of grains—thus one will not have to spend energy in counting and remembering the number one has already finished. When all the grains of rice are removed, the japa is done.

Sumirni Mala

If the japa is prescribed in terms of the number of repetitions of mantra—such as 1,000 times, 10,000 times, 12,500 times, or 125,000 times—one should first count that amount of rice grains and keep them in a metal pot. Each time the mantra is recited, a grain can be removed from the pot. Or, after completing a mala, one can remove a single grain, which indicates that the japa of the same mantra has been done 108 times. (The pot should be kept on the left side since the mala is done with the right hand.)

The best way is to divide the total number of japa by 108, and the result should determine the number of rice grains to be kept in the pot. If the amount of japa is not evenly divisible by 108, see how much is remaining, and keep that number of grains separately. After completing the required number of malas, stop the mala and do the mantra, removing with each mantra one grain of the remaining number of grains. For example, if the japa is prescribed to be done 1,000 times, then 1,000 ÷ 108 = $9^{28}/_{108}$. Now 9 times the mala can be done, and the remaining 28, which cannot be divided by 108, should be kept separately. Thus you have nine grains in one pot and twenty-eight grains in another pot. Do one mala and remove one grain from the pot that has nine grains. When all nine grains are done, stop the mala and do the mantra one time and remove one grain

from the pot that has twenty-eight grains, and repeat this twenty-eight times. This way one does not have to count 1,000 grains of rice and repeat the exercise after every mantra.

For doing the homa, the total number of japa should be divided by ten and the same technique of keeping counted number of rice grains should be used. For example, if japa is prescribed 1,000 times, the homa will be 1,000 ÷ 10 = 100. If the japa is prescribed 125,000 times, the homa will be 125,000 ÷ 10 = 12,500.

Homa is not performed immediately after the number of japa is finished, as the japa may take many days or months if the prescribed number is large. In such a case, the aspirant should, after finishing the japa, wait until a suitable time when the order of the planets is right and, perform the homa on an auspicious day (e.g., the eleventh day of the ascending moon cycle or on the full-moon day).

If the homa cannot be done in one day only, it should be done in as many days as possible. In that case, the total number of mantras should be divided by the number of mantras that could be easily repeated by the aspirant in a day. Each day the japa should be done, and with each mantra the offering of samigri and ghee should be made.

Types of Mala Beads

Mala, the counting device for japa, is generally made of 108 beads. The material that the beads are made of has an effect on the body chemistry. Possible materials include:

- Tulsi wood
- Sandalwood
- Lotus seeds
- Rudrakshas (dried seeds from the rudraksha tree)
- Coral
- Pearl
- Quartz or crystal

- Shell
- Silver

Small malas, called *sumirni,* are made of fewer beads, although the number is divisible into 108. For example, a sumirni is made of twenty-seven beads. Doing a sumirni four times completes 108 repetitions of a mantra. A mala also can be made of fifty-four beads, in which case two malas make one japa of 108 repetitions.

Tulsi mala is best for believers of Lord Vishnu, Ram, Krishna, or Hanuman.

Rudraksha mala is for believers in Lord Shiva and Shakti.

Sandalwood mala is common.

Lotus seed mala is only used for Maran, Uchchatan, and Vidweshan Karmas.

For Shanti Karma, pearl mala or coral mala is very effective. Coral mala is good for worship and japa done to attain wealth.

A mala made of rudraksha is supposed to be the most beneficial and even better than a mala made from silver, gold, coral, or pearls, emeralds, and rubies. The rudraksha should be neither very small nor very big. Rudrakshas the size of a cherry are supposed to be the best.

Besides being a counting device, a mala is a good centering device. Engagement of the fingertips is engagement of consciousness. Mala practice creates a habitual centered state of consciousness.

A mala gets charged with energy after it has been used for japa very frequently. If one has done 125,000 japa on a mala, that mala itself becomes *siddha* (charged with energy), and by wearing it one gets energy from it; it is in fact the same energy one has put in it while doing the japa. Also, the mala conditions the brain, so that each time you see it, it reminds you of your mantra.

For starting a new japa, a new mala should always be used. If the mantra remains the same, however, the same mala can be used for generations.

Again, mala should not be touched by the index finger or the little finger, as shown in the accompanying illustration. One must also remember that it is prohibited to pass the extra bead, or sumeru.

HOMA: FIRE WORSHIP

Homa, or *havan,* is fire worship. Fire is visible divine energy that can be seen and felt. It is said to be the mediator between humans and gods.

Tantra believes in one God with many forms. Because God performs many kinds of functions, He is known by many names. For performing each job, He has to shape himself into a different form. That is why there appear so many gods; but the sadhak knows that all the names are His name and all the forms are His form. He is one but appears to be many.

When He creates, He is called Brahma.

When He preserves, He is called Vishnu.

When He destroys, He is called Shiva.

When He brings forth the energy of heat and light, He is called Sun.

When He beholds the creation, He is called Earth.

He is neither male nor female. His static aspect is male; His dynamic aspect is female. Each manifested aspect has both a male and a female side. Every male god has a shakti —a female counterpart.

This division of jobs creates many sides, many names, many forms of God. These gods are not the Supreme, but one aspect of the Supreme, so they are less in power. This creates a hierarchy. The Supreme is omnipotent, and Brahma is just one little part of Him as creator, Vishnu is just one little part of Him as preserver, and Shiva is just one little part of Him as destroyer. These three gods are His three aspects. He is like the sun with uncountable beams of light. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are only three main rays of His light. Then there are other energies through which these three work. They are called sub-gods. India, king of the gods of heaven, is responsible for rain. Varuna is the god of water. Kubera is the god of wealth. Agni is the god of fire. Pavan is the god of forty-nine types of air. Prajapati is the creator (Brahma created Prajapati, and Prajapati creates with his shakti, the Praja = the people). Vishwakarma is the god of crafts, the celestial architect.

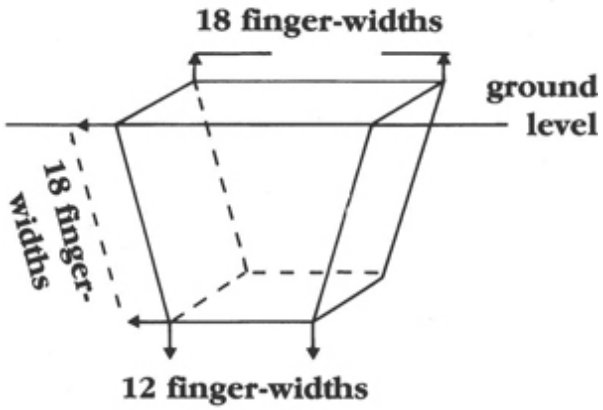
Homa is performed to please these subgods. The mediator between these gods and the sub-gods and human beings is the fire god. So the gift to these gods is the emotion on which they survive, and it is offered to them through fire worship.

Kund

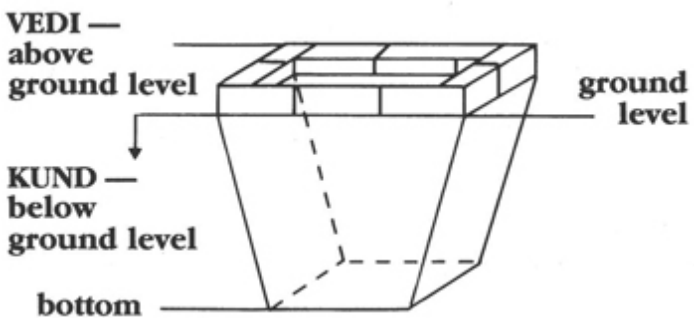
Homa is performed in a receptacle called the *kund.* This kund should be made according to the amount of fire to be created. If big logs of wood are being used, the kund will be

big. If the fire worship is not to be done on a large scale, then the one doing the homa should build a small fireplace.

For normal homa the aspirant should measure the place with the hands. The kund is usually like an inverted pyramid, narrow at the bottom and broad on the top. The bottom part should be a square of about twelve finger-widths of the one performing the homa. The top should be one and a half times the bottom, which makes it eighteen finger-widths. The height of the kund should be about the same size of the top. It is best if the kund is made by digging an inverted pyramidlike opening in the ground, keeping the bottom narrow and the top broad, as shown in the diagram.



Then a *vedi* (fireplace) is made by raising the level of the kund above the ground with bricks. The vedi should be decorated and made attractive with colorful flowers, leaves, grains, or beans. A colored border motif can also be painted on the raised bricks using vegetable and mineral substances.



Fuel

Wood to be used as fuel for the fire worship must come from certain prescribed trees. If no mention of wood is made, however, one can take any wood that burns easily without creating much smoke. In India the wood from a mango tree is most often used. One picks up thin, dry branches with bark and cuts or breaks them to suit the size of the kund. The wood should be completely dry. Pine wood or other oily woods should be used only when mango wood or any other oil-free burning wood is not available.

Samigri

Samigri means “material.” The material used in homa, or havan, is known as havan samigri. This samigri is a combination of thirty-six herbs. It purifies the atmosphere and smells very good, like incense. In India the herbs are available at the market, in herb shops. In Europe and North America, stores that sell Indian spices and herbs have it packaged from India. One should add some ghee and powdered raw sugar to the samigri. One tablespoon ghee and one-half cup raw sugar are sufficient for 500 grams (one pound) of samigri.

Ghee

Clarified butter, or ghee, is available in Indian-food stores. Only the ghee made from clarified cow butter should be

used in homa—not the ghee made from vegetable oils, known as vegetable ghee.

Ahuti

Ahuti is the offering to the fire. Ahuti can be given by pouring a small spoonful of ghee into the kund where die fire has been lit. Or it can be given by pouring a small amount of samigri into the kund. The use of the index finger and the little finger is prohibited in offering the samigri. The one giving ahuti of samigri should thus hold the samigri in the right hand, keeping the index and little fingers apart.

When the homa is performed, the chemicals present in the samigri are burned and get converted into the gaseous form of smell. The smell mixes in the atmosphere, and the same atmospheric air enters the breath of the one doing the homa and those who are in the vicinity. This air contains all the chemicals of the herbs in gaseous form, and thus these chemicals go to the gods that are present as different energies or abilities inside the human organism. These chemicals influence the body chemistry and bring about the desired effect.

AUM: THE ESSENCE OF ALL MANTRAS

In the *Chandogya Upanishad* it is said:

> The essence of all beings is earth.
> The essence of earth is water.
> The essence of water is the plants.
> The essence of the plants is man.
> The essence of man is speech.
> The essence of speech is *Rigveda.*
> The essence of *Rigveda* is *Samveda*
> The essence of *Samveda* is Udgith [which is AUM].

That Udgith is the best of all essences, deserving die highest place.

So the essence of all is AUM (or OM) in all scriptures of Vedic origin. AUM is a whole that represents the all-encompassing cosmic consciousness, turiya, beyond words and concepts: the consciousness of the fourth dimension, pure self-existence. The Upanishads say that AUM is Brahman himself, that “God in the form of sound is AUM.” The *Mandukya Upanishad* states:

The *Pranava* [AUM] is a bow,
The arrow is the self,
and Brahman is said to be the Mark.

The *Maitreye Upanishad* compares AUM to an arrow, with manas (mind, thought, idea) as its point, laid upon the bow of the human body (the breath), which after penetrating the darkness of ignorance reaches the light of the supreme state. Just as a spider climbs up its thread and gains freedom, so the yogis climb toward liberation by the syllable AUM.

AUM is the primordial sound of timeless reality that vibrates within us from the beginning-less past and reverberates in our entire being. Its sound opens the innermost being to the vibration of a higher reality—not a reality outside the person, but one that is eternal and was forever present within and around him or her.

The poet Rabindranath Tagore has beautifully said about the sacred syllable that AUM is the symbolic word for the perfect, the infinite, the eternal. The sound is already perfect in itself and represents the wholeness of all creation. All our religious contemplation begins and ends with AUM. Its purpose is to fill the mind with the presentiment of infinite perfection and to free it from the world of narrow selfishness.[5]

This phenomenal world is a creation of frequencies. According to all spiritual sciences, first God created sound, and from these sound frequencies came the phenomenal world. Our total existence is constituted by this sound, which becomes a mantra when organized by a desire to communicate, manifest, invoke or materialize, excite, or energize manifested or unmanifested energy.

From the Brahman, the Supreme, with his Parashakti Maya, issued Nada (Shiva Shakti, male and female energies, as the word or "sound"). And from Nada, *bindu* appeared. This manifestation is known as *Shabda-Brahman* (The Supreme Consciousness as sound), which is the indistinct sound produced by the unfolding of energized consciousness (*parambindu*). This inaudible, indistinct sound is the *avyakta,* the unmanifest energy which manifests itself in a triad of shakti:

1. *Gyan shakti*—knowledge
2. *Ichcha shakti*—will
3. *Kriya shakti*—action

These three are associated with the three gunas—tamas, sattva, and rajas—which represent nature as the descent from spirit to matter and vice versa, and nature as the dense veil of spirit. The energy that is manifested as the phenomenal world is thus sound and the treasure house of the gunas, which have endless modifications. The *nada* or sound is a combination of Shiva and Shakti, the eternal pair of opposites pervading the universe. In the human being, they are the two sides: the right side is Shiva and the left side Shakti. He is in Swayambhu Lingam in muladhara chakra as Shiva, and she is coiled around it in three and a half coils as Kundalini Shakti.

The material content and the essence of all material content are sound, as expressed in this passage from the *Chandogya Upanishad:*

AUM is the most perfect and precise mantra:
A of AUM is the waking state—subjective consciousness.
U of AUM is the dream state—consciousness of the inner world of thoughts, feelings, and desires.
M of AUM is the deep-sleep state—consciousness of undifferentiated unity.

AUM is the best, first, and last mantra. It is the supreme consciousness in sound form.

A is sattva and Brahma.
U is rajas and Vishnu.
M is tamas and Shiva.

AUM is thus the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer all in one. Using AUM before and after any mantra harmonizes the two hemispheres of the brain and creates a magical effect. This placement of the same sound before and after a mantra is called the *samput* in Sanskrit. In *Tattva Prakash* (one of the books of Tantric scripture) AUM is called the *tara* mantra or *tarini* mantra and is supposed to be used to obtain a siddha state, the state of being free from physical bondage. It brings union with the Brahman if it is repeated 300,000 times.

A is *akar* (form), the earth element.
U is *urdhagami,* the upward-moving air element.
M is *akasha,* the void.

When AUM is done as *udgith* or *pranava,* the sadhak should use deep tones, and the breath should be directed through the nasal passage, as automatically happens when the last part of the sound AUM (the *M)* is pronounced. This *M,* known as *ma* or *makar,* makes the lips close, which is like locking the door from the outside world and reaching the deep inside of Brahmar-andhara, also known as *andh-kup*

(blind well) and *bharmar gupha* (cave of the bumble bee). This, in physiological language, is our corpus callosum. The vibrations made in pronouncing *M* in deep tones are similar to the buzzing of a bumble bee, and the sound vibrates the top of the cranium, that is, the whole cerebral cortex. There are many convulsions and depressions in the brain in the area of the cerebral cortex, resembling valleys of a mountain. These valleys are depressions in the lobes—and the reverberations and pulsations created by *the M* sound of AUM help the brain to gain more area for storage of information—but this is possible only when the japa is done for a long time daily. In creative artists, poets, and musicians this pranava appears as a humming sound that helps them to create new compositions.

SOME MANTRAS FOR JAPA

1. AUM GANG GANAPATAYE NAMAH—AUM

If this mantra is repeated 125,000 times—5,000 each day for 25 days—one will see the effect of the mantra. Ganesh (or Ganapati) is supposed to be the obstacle remover. He is married to “Riddhi” and “Siddhi,” so he gives all kinds of *riddhis* and *siddhis* (physical and mental powers). He gives peace and prosperity. The japa should be done after purification (after taking a bath). Having a picture or idol of Ganesh on hand at the time of japa will provide additional help. If the japa is done 125,000 times, then one-tenth of the total—that is, 12,500—should be recited before the fire (homa), and ahuti of ghee and *ashthagandh* (a combination of eight nice-smelling herbs) should be given as offering to enhance the influence.

2. AUM AING SARASWATYE NAMAH—AUM

AING is the *bij-akshar* (seed syllable or condensed form of the larger mantra) of Saraswati, goddess of speech, music,

knowledge, and the fine arts. If this mantra is repeated 500,000 times, one can see Saraswati and will become enlightened. All knowledge will be revealed, and Saraswati will reside on one's tongue—that is, whatever one says will come true. One-tenth (or 50,000) of the repetitions should be accompanied by homa.

3. AUM KRING KALIKAYE NAMAH—AUM

KRING (or KRIM, as it is called in Madras) is the bij-akshar of the Divine Mother Kali. The number of japa prescribed is 500,000, and homa with 50,000 ahutis should be performed afterward.

4. AUM AING HRING KLEENG CHAMUNDAYE VICHCHEY—AUM

This is the most popular mantra of the Divine Mother Durga, given in *Chandi and Durga Saptshati* (Tantric scriptures). This mantra should be repeated 500,000 times, and the fire worship should be performed with 50,000 ahutis of the same mantra.

5. AUM DUNG DURGAYE NAMAH—AUM

This also is a mantra for Mother Durga. DUNG is her bij-akshar. Perform the same amount of japa and homa as in mantra 4.

6. AUM HRING NAMAH—AUM

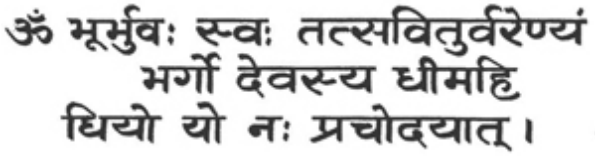
HRING is the bij-akshar of the goddess of maya and is known as Tantric pranav, or Tantric sound. As AUM is for Vedantics, so is HRING for Tantrics. The performance of 500,000 japa and 50,000 ahutis of ghee and ashthagandh brings siddhis.

7. AUM SHRING HRING KLEENG MAHA LAKSHMAYE NAMAH—AUM

SHRING is Lakshmi bija. The prescribed number for japa is 100,000, and 10,000 ahutis of ghee and samigri bring

Mother Lakshmi’s blessings in the form of peace, prosperity, and harmony.

Gayatri Mantra: A Mantra for All Purposes



BHUR BHUVAH SWAH
TAT SAVITUR VARENIYAM
BHARGO DEVASYA DHI MAHI
DHIYO YO NA PRACHODAYAT

Repetition of Gayatri Mantra 125,000 times brings siddhi. After the mantra has been done for the prescribed number of times, fire worship should be done with 12,000 ahutis of havan samigri with an offering of raw sugar, black sesame seeds (125 gm), and ghee (250 gm). After the homa a small feast should be held for twelve girls of eight years of age and one boy of six years. The mantra is siddha now and can be used to heal physiological or psychological diseases, cure ill luck, and give victory over enemies.

For Healing. Before touching the patient or giving any medicine, repeat one mala of Gayatri. After completing the mala (108 beads), give the patient the medicine for the disease. If he or she is not taking medicine, put water into a clean copper, brass, bronze, or silver pot, shake the water, and repeat the mantra only once before giving the water to the patient. This water will have a miraculous effect.

For Good Memory and Increased Mental Power. Japa of Gayatri Mantra should be done facing east before sunrise, after bathing. The forehead should remain wet. This is accomplished by applying a thick layer of sandalwood paste

on it. The paste is made by rubbing a sandalwood block on a stone and adding a pinch of saffron and one small crystal of camphor (or a pinch of camphor powder) with a few drops of water to make it a thick paste like honey. Gayatri Mantra should be recited repeating the sound AUM three times *before* the mantra. Japa should be done daily either 1 mala = 108 times; 3 malas = 324 times; 5 malas = 540 times; 7 malas = 756 times; 9 malas = 972 times; or 11 malas = 1,188 times. After doing the mala, rub both palms together while reciting the mantra, then rub both hands on the forehead, touching the place of the third eye with both ring fingers while the right hand rubs the right side of the forehead and the left hand rubs the left side of the forehead, reaching up to the temples. Then bring the hands to the head, then to the eyes, ears, nose, cheeks, back of the neck, and front of the neck, in order. This exercise should be done in a slow rhythm. Hold the breath (no inhaling or exhaling while touching the starting point, the third eye) until the end (the front of the neck).

For Obtaining Wealth. At the end of the Gayatri Mantra, repeat SHRING, the Lakshmi bija, three times. One mala (108 times) should be done every day.

All implements used in worship should be yellow, and yellow food should be taken for the period japa is done. Use a yellow woolen rug, a mala of yellow haldi (turmeric root) beads, yellow pots, yellow flowers, and yellow *prasad* (consecrated food) for offering. A pinch of saffron should be added to the water in the water pot. The aspirant should fast on Sunday and should massage his or her body with oil mixed with turmeric powder. The japa should be done in the early morning hours, preferably before sunrise.

To Cure Oneself of Disease. The sick person should do the japa of Gayatri after bathing, adding AING three times at the end of the mantra for diseases related to aggravation of

mucus and bile; or HUNG three times in the end of the mantra for disease caused by aggravation of wind. The japa should be done 108 times each day in the early-morning hours, after washing.

To Dispel Evil Spirits. An *agnihotra* (homa) should be done, and 108 ahutis of ordinary havan-samigri should be given to the fire. After the havan has been done, the whitish-gray ashes should be collected from the fireplace *(havan kund otyagya kund)* and rubbed on the hands, feet, face, ears, head, stomach, and back of the one who is possessed by an evil spirit. The Gayatri Mantra should be recited during the rubbing of the ashes. The evil spirit will vanish after one rubbing of ashes. These ashes should be kept in a bottle and may be used whenever needed by the attendants of the patient. They can be used on any other patient—but before using them, one should put the ashes in one's hand and recite Gayatri Mantra eleven times, and keep on reciting while rubbing.

Types of Gayatri Mantra

Gayatri Mantra is composed of twenty-four sound-syllables. Each sound-syllable is the energy of any one of the twenty-four gods, and Gayatri is a combination of the energy of twenty-four gods or a combined force of twenty-four different types of energies. Each energy is of a different nature and serves a different purpose. Doing japa of the desired mantra daily can help in obtaining the desired energy. One mala each day in the early-morning hours is sufficient.

ॐ
एकदन्ताय विद्महे,
वक्रतुण्डाय धीमहि।
तन्नो बुद्धिः प्रचोदयात्॥

1. *Ganesh Gayatri:* For removing obstacles

AUM EIKDANTAYE VIDMAHE, VAKRATUNAYE DHI-MAHI
TAN NO BUDDHIH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
नारायणाय विद्महे,
वासुदेवाय धीमहि।
तन्नो विष्णुः प्रचोदयात्॥

2. Vishnu Gayatri: For welfare of one's family

AUM NARAYANAYE VIDMAHE, VASUDEVAYE DHI-MAHI
TAN NO VISHNU PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
पञ्चवक्त्राय विद्महे,
महादेवाय धीमहि।
तन्नो रूद्रः प्रचोदयात्॥

3. *Shiva Gayatri:* For easing problems, for peace and prosperity

AUM PANCHVAKTRAYE VIDMAHE, MAHADEVAYE DHI-MAHI
TAN NO RUDRA PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
परमेश्वराय विद्महे,
परातत्वाय धीमहि।
तन्नो ब्रह्मा प्रचोदयात्॥

4. *Brahma Gayatri:* To increase productivity

AUM PARMESHWARAYE VIDMAHE, PARA-TATTVAYE DHI-MAHI
TAN NO BRAHMA PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
दशरथाय विद्महे,
सीतावल्लभाय धीमहि।
तन्नो रामः प्रचोदयात्॥

5. *Ram Gayatri:* For security, increase in name and status

AUM DASHRATHAYE VIDMAHE, SITA BAL-LABHAYE DHI-MAHI
TAN NO RAMAH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
देवकीनन्दनाय विद्महे,
वासुदेवाय धीमहि।
तन्नो कृष्णःप्रचोदयात्॥

6. *Krishna Gayatri:* For success in job, increase in activity

AUM DEVKINANDANAYE VIDMAHE, VASUDEVAYE DHI-MAHI
TAN NO KRISHNAH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
सहस्रनेत्राय विद्महे,
वज्रास्त्राय धीमहि।
तन्नो इन्द्रः प्रचोदयात्॥

7. *Indra Gayatri:* For security in aggression, war

AUM SAHATRA-NETRAYE VIDMAHE, VAJRAAS-TRAYE DHI-MAHI
TAN NO INDRAH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
आञ्जनेयाय विद्महे,
महाबलाय धीमहि।
तन्नो हनुमान् प्रचोदयात्॥

8. *Hanuman Gayatri:* For increasing love in performing duties, selfless service

AUM ANJANEYAYE VIDMAHE, MAHABALAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO HANUMAN PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
भास्कराय विद्महे,
दिवाकराय धीमहि।
तन्नो सूर्यः प्रचोदयात्॥

9. *Surya Gayatri:* For curing disease, freedom from ailments

AUM BHASKARAYE VIDMAHE, DIVAKRARAYE DHIMAHI
TANNO SURYAH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
कृष्णपुत्राय विद्महे,
अमृततत्वाय धीमहि।
तन्नो चन्द्रः प्रचोदयात्॥

10. *Chandra Gayatri:* For subduing anxiety, pessimism, worries, psychosis, neurosis

AUM KSHIRPUTRAYE VIDMAHE, AMRIT-TATTVAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO CHANDRAH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
सूर्यपुत्राय विद्महे,
महाकालाय धीमहि।
तन्नो यमः प्रचोदयात्॥

11. *Yama Gayatri:* For freedom from fear of death

AUM SURYA-PUTRAYE VIDMAHE, MAHA KAIAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO YAMAH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
जलविम्वाय विद्महे,
नीलपुरूषाय धीमहि।
तन्नो वरूणः प्रचोदयात्॥

12. *Varuna Gayatri:* To increase love between man and woman

AUM JALBIMBAYE VIDMAHE, NIL-PURUSHAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO VARUNAH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
नारायणाय विद्महे,
वासुदेवाय धीमहि।
तन्नो नारायण प्रचोदयात्॥

13. *Narayan Gayatri:* To increase administrative power

AUM NARAYANAYE VIDMAHE, VASUDEVAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO NARAYAN PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
उग्रनरसिंहाय विद्महे,
वज्रनखाय धीमहि।
तन्नोनरसिंहः प्रचोदयात्॥

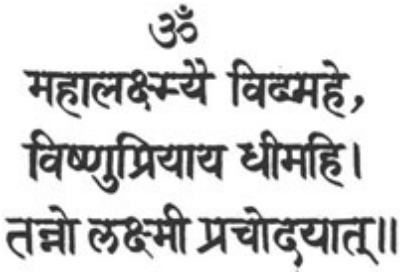
14. *Narsingh Gayatri:* To increase the ability to help others

AUM UGRANARSINGHAYE VIDMAHE, VAJRA-NAKHAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO NARSINGH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
गिरिजायै विद्महे,
शिवप्रियायै धीमहि।
तन्नो दुर्गा प्रचोदयात्॥

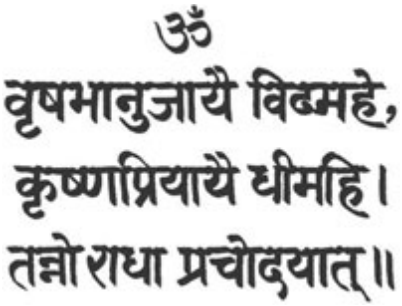
15. *Durga Gayatri:* For victory over obstacles, enemies, pains, and sufferings

AUM GIRJAYE VIDMAHE, SHIV PRIYAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO DURGA PRACHODAYAT



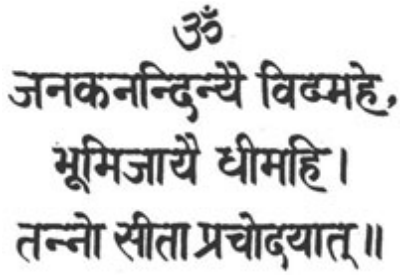
16. *Lakshmi Gayatri:* For wealth, luxuries, status, promotion in job

AUM MAHALAKSHMAYE VIDMAHE, VISHNU-PRIYAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO LAKSHMIH PRACHODAYAT



17. *Radha Gayatri:* To increase devotion, divine love

AUM VRASHBHANUJAYE VIDMAHE, KRISHNAPRIYAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO RADHA PRACHODAYAT



18. Sita *Gayatri:* To increase power to work on oneself, penance, and tolerance

AUM JANAKNANDNIYE VIDMAHE, BHUMI-JAYEI DHI-MAHI
TANNO SITA PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
सरस्वत्यै विद्महे,
ब्रह्मापुत्र्यै धीमहि।
तन्नो सरस्वती प्रचोदयात्॥

19. *Saraswati Gayatri:* For memory, wisdom, knowledge, creativity

AUM SARASWATEYE VIDMAHE, BRAHMAPUT-RIYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO SARASWATI PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
महाज्वालाय विद्महे,
अग्निदेवाय धीमहि।
तन्नो अग्निः प्रचोदयात्॥

20. *Agni Gayatri:* To provide vitality and ojas to body, mind, prana, and all sense organs, including the four internal organs and all work organs

AUM MAHAJWALAYE VIDMAHE, AGNIDEVAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO AGNIH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
पृथ्वीदेव्यै विद्महे,
सहस्रमूर्त्यै धीमहि।
तन्नो पृथ्वी प्रचोदयात्॥

21. *Prithvi Gayatri:* For stability, patience, cooperation

AUM PRITHVIDEVYE VIDMAHE, SHASTRA-MOORTAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO PRITHVI PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
कामदेवाय विद्महे,
पुष्पवाणाय धीमहि।
तन्नो कामः प्रचोदयात् ॥

22. *Kaw Gayatri:* To increase sensuality, sexual satisfaction, sexual power, vitality, vigor, stamina

AUM KAMDEVAYE VIDMAHE, PUSHPVANAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO KAMAH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
परमहंसाय विद्महे,
महाहंसाय धीमहि।
तन्नो हंसः प्रचोदयात् ॥

23. *Hans Gayatri:* To increase *vivek* (power of discrimination)

AUM PARAMHANSAYE VIDMAHE, MAHAHAN-SAYE DHI-MAHI
TANNO HANSAH PRACHODAYAT

ॐ
वनीश्वराय विद्महे,
हयग्रीवाय धीमहि।
तन्नो हयग्रीवः प्रचोदयात्॥

24. *Hayagriv Gayatri:* To increase courage; remove fear of all kinds

AUM VANISHWARAYE VIDMAHE, HAYAGRI-VAYE DHI-MAHI

TANNO HAYAGRW PRACHODAYAT

For Poisonings and Bites (***snake, scorpion,*** *etc.*). Ashes from sandalwood or peepal (banyan) wood, obtained after a homa with 108 recitations of Gayatri Mantra, should be collected and kept in a blue bottle. Use whenever needed for curing all kinds of poisons, including scorpion sting or snake bite. Observe the following method:

1. Check which nostril is working.
2. Keep ashes in the hand on the same side as the dominant nostril.
3. Recite Gayatri Mantra, adding HUNG at the end, while meditating on Gayatri riding a horse. Recite the mantra eleven times.
4. Rub the ashes while chanting the mantra: AUM BHUR BHUVAH SWAH—TAT SAVITUR VARENIYAM—BHARGO DEVASYA DHI MAHI—DHIYO YO NA PRACHODAYAT—HUNG.
5. Keep in another small bottle 10 grams of mustard seeds made into a paste. Recite the mantra 108 times while making the paste in a stone mortar. This paste should be made and stored like the ashes and used simultaneously or after rubbing the ashes. Take the paste when needed and apply it to the tips of all fingers, all toes, earlobes, navel, tip of the nose, and forehead.

Mahamrityunjaya Mantra

AUM TRIYAMBAKAM YAJA MAHE
SUGANDHIM PUSHTHI VARDHANAM
URVARUK MIV BANDHANANI
MRITYOR MUKSHIYE MAMRITAT

This powerful mantra of Shiva the Rudra removes physical, mental, and celestial ailments. Like Gayatri, this is an all-purpose mantra and is commonly prescribed by astrologers, *vaidyas* (medicine men), and Tantrics. Japa of 125,000 times removes the fear of death, even if the condition of the ailing person is so severe that the doctors become helpless and no medicine works. After japa, homa should be done with 12,500 repetitions of the mantra and an offering of black sesame seeds with each.

Mahamrityunjaya is a name of Shiva, the Lord of Destruction. As Mahakala he is Lord of Death. Meditation on the Shiva with four arms is necessary. In his Mahamrityunjaya form, Shiva is sitting in a pond. Two of his arms are holding water pots, from which he is pouring water over his head. His third hand on the right side is doing a mala, and in his fourth hand on the left side he has another water pot, from which water is constantly issuing. Sometimes one of his right hands is shown in a blessing *mudra* (gesture).

Mahamrityunjaya Mantra is supposed to give victory over death, suffering, and disease. It removes obstacles, creates a suitable environment, and brings happiness to life.

Twelve-Syllable Mantra of Vishnu

AUM NAMO BHAGVATE VASUDEVAYE

The number of japa for this mantra is 1,200,000. Homa with 120,000 ahutis with an offering of cow’s ghee and black sesame seeds is prescribed.

Eight-Syllable Mantra of Shiva

AUM NAMAH SHIVAYE

When only NAMAH SHIVAYE is counted, it is a five-syllable mantra.

BIJA MANTRAS

Bija Mantras are seed mantras having several syllables and are supposed to be more powerful than other mantras. To add power to a mantra, sometimes these bijas are added, either at the beginning or at the end, or at both the beginning and the end. Bija Mantras may or may not convey sense, but their meanings are the forms of the particular gods or goddesses whose bijas they are.

Sometimes a Bija Mantra consists of only one or two syllables.

Bija	**God or Goddess**
AING	Saraswati
HRING	Maya
KLING	Kama
KRING	Kali
SHRING	Lakshmi
EENG	Yoni
LUNG	Earth
VANG	Water; Varuna
RANG	Fire
YANG	Air
HANG	Akasha
ANG	Surya (Sun)
MANG	Moon
GANG	Ganesh
DUNG	Durga

Some Bija Mantras are abbreviated forms of a longer mantra. For example, Shodshi Mantra, or Tripur Sundari Mantra, is:

HRING KA AYE EE LA HRING HA SA KA HA LA HRING SAKALA HRING

The derivation of the above Bija Mantra is as follows:

KAMOYONIH KAMLA VAJRAPANIR
GUHA HASA MATRISHVABHRAMINDRA
PUNAR GUHA SAKALA MAYEYA CHA
PURUCHCHAIVA VISHVAMATADI VIDDYOM

KAMA (KA), YONI (AYE), KAMLA (EEE),
VAJRAPANI INDRA (LA),
GUHA (HRING), HASA VARNAS
MATRISHVA—VAYU (KA), ABHRA (HA)
INDRA (LA), PUNAH GUHA HRING, SAKALA
VARNAS AND MAYA HRING

KA AYE EEE LA HRING HA SA KA HA LA
HRING SAKALA HRING

This mantra seems ridiculous and meaningless at first—but when we know the original, the abbreviated form suggests to us the original.

CHAPTER FOUR

YANTRA: THE VISUAL TOOL

Yantras are visual tools that serve either as centering devices or as symbolic compositions of the energy pattern of a deity as seen by Tantric seers in their visions.

The *Kularnav Tantra* says:

YANTRAM MANTRA MAYAM PROKTAM
MANTRATIM DEVATAIV HI
DEHAT MANOR YATHA BHEDO
YANTRA DEVATAYOSTATHA.

This means that deity pervades both yantra and mantra. As there is a difference between mind and body, so there is between yantra and mantra. Yantra is the body or form of the deity *(devata),* whereas mantra is the mind, consciousness, spirit, or name.

Elsewhere the scripture says that as oil is dear to the lamp, so is the body dear to the spirit and yantra to the deity, because yantra is the external, visual expression through which the deity receives the devotion.

When a yantra is adopted for worship and the energy is invoked in it, it becomes a symbolic representative of the deity—and actually *is* the deity himself when the sadhak abandons his analytical, critical attitude—and the energy circulates in higher centers. Every yantra becomes the dwelling place of the deity by whose name it is known. The essence of the iconographic image of the deity, the spirit, is retained in the yantric form; yet no idol or picture of a deity is as powerful as a yantra. An iconographic idol is a personal thing, whereas a yantra is universal, because it is composed of archetypal forms that are common to all existing

phenomena. A yantra is therefore an archetypal unit, and the very process of making a yantra is an archetypal activity that works with the encoding of the genes, so that the divine revelations repeat themselves during the process. It is a process by which one moves from concrete reality to abstract truth.

DEFINITION OF YANTRA

The word *yantra* is used in two or more ways in Sanskrit. It comes from the root *yam,* which means support or hold. To hold is to contain, to keep, to maintain the essence of an object, a thought, or a concept. The syllable *tra* comes from *trana,* or “liberation from bondage.” So a yantra is that which preserves the essence and liberates. In a more general way, *yantra* means “tool” in Sanskrit. When the word *yam* is used in its symbolic sense (Yama is the Lord of Death) and *tra* means getting *trana,* or freedom, then a yantra is that which gives liberation from the clutches of death (the cycle of birth and rebirth), which gives *moksha* (liberation).

The first definition of yantra, which makes it the beholder of the essence of the energy of the deity, makes yantra a symbol. Symbols are precise and crystallized means of expression, corresponding in essence to the inner life, which is intensive and qualitative, as opposed to the external world, which is extensive and quantitative. In symbol, the particular represents the general. It is a creative representation of the inscrutable. This makes yantra a reflection of the Divine. When the word *yantra* becomes a symbol, it becomes every symbol—and every symbol becomes a yantra.

As a tool, yantra is used to withdraw consciousness from the outer world and direct it to the inner world, so as to help the sadhak go beyond the normal framework of the mind to the altered state of consciousness known as turiya.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF YANTRAS

The act of drawing and painting yantras teaches the mind how to concentrate, how to be one-pointed. To some people this practice is fascinating and absorbing, while others might not find it as interesting as doing calligraphy or singing—but even these latter people can draw a valuable lesson from creating yantras. The geometrical patterns of which a yantra is composed are governed by a law which is communicated to one who attempts to draw it. Attention is needed, for if one becomes a little careless, one makes mistakes. Yantra drawing requires accuracy, exactness, discipline, concentration, neatness, and patience.

Physiologists have observed that comprehending geometrical forms and patterns—circles, triangles, squares, and the like—is the work of the right hemisphere of the cerebral cortex. A person in whom only the left hemisphere is functional will find it impossible to match geometrical patterns. The geometrical forms of the yantra activate the right hemisphere, which is visual and nonverbal. Yantra meditation thus increases inner silence and tranquillity. It also creates a tendency to be inattentive to speech. The construction of a yantra is of great significance, and for all yantras used for meditation it is done in such a way that all the linear forms intersect with a central axis or nucleus. This nucleus is either a point *(bindu)* or a sound (Bija Mantra). A point, however, is supposed to be the most powerful stimulus for the visual cortex.

HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY AND YANTRA

A black point on a white background forms the most precise and powerful yantra. One who is satisfied with this point needs no more explanations and definitions.

To be centered is a basic human necessity. All that has been accomplished in the field of knowledge is a product of centered minds. To be one-pointed, one needs to practice some technique and to develop a habit of remaining centered.

Mind, through its association with the sense organs, becomes manifold, restricting. This slippery nature of the mind turns off when the sense organs are engaged. Exactly the same thing happens in japa: when the aspirant repeats the same sound again and again, the mind finds no opportunity to fantasize, to roam around in the forest of desires, and becomes quiet, for a stabilized image or sound is not interesting to the mind.

Physiologists have learned that the output from each eye is conveyed to the brain by about one million nerve fibers bundled together in the optic nerve. There is a partial crossing of the optic nerves in the optic chiasma. The geniculate and the cortex on the left side are connected to the two half retinas and are therefore concerned with the right half of the visual scene, and the converse is the case for the right geniculate and the right cortex. Each geniculate and each cortex receives input from both eyes, and each is concerned with the opposite half of the visual world. Symmetrical geometric patterns thus seem to be the best stimuli for both geniculates and cortex. They produce similar effects on both sides and thus create a centered state.

Unfortunately most experiments pertaining to vision are conducted on animals, so that no data on the impact of yantras on the visual cortex of the brain are available to help us understand the subject in greater detail. However, scientists have observed that both a retinal ganglion cell and a geniculate cell respond best to a circular spot of a light-sensitive element of a particular size, in a particular part or area of the visual field. The size of the spot is critical, because each cell’s receptive field is divided, with an excitatory center and an inhibitatory center. A spot exactly filling the excitatory center or a cell is a more effective stimulus than a larger spot that invades the inhibitatory area. These retinal ganglion cells and lateral geniculate cells, supplying input to the visual cortex, have a circular symmetry. They respond very well to circular patterns, a spot or a point, because their receptive field is circular.

Mandalas (representing the cosmos) and yantras (representing a particular deity) therefore correspond to the internal structure of retinal and geniculate cells. Their construction is based on the Tantric seers' intuitive knowledge of the mind's nature, its relationship with subtle channels of energy (nadis), and the human need for a symbolic life. They are a product of this universal human need, and through their archetypal language they transform the psychic energy in us, making life more meaningful, joyful, and worth living.

YANTRAS AND THE TWIN HEMISPHERES

A yantra, as used by practitioners of Tantra, is combined with a mantra to engage the visual and verbal hemispheres of the brain at the same time. Normally both hemispheres alternate and work separately because of their functional specialization. The geometrical pattern of a Tantric yantra, when combined with sound (mantra), can engage both sides equally. Aspirants train themselves in the art of thinking in images as a means of attaining abstract concentration. Concentration on timeless objects establishes a relationship between the creator and the created, the abstract and the concrete.

Yantra, being related to imaginal thinking, works with the right hemisphere, and mantra, because of its verbal nature and relationship with imaginal thinking in terms of abstract generalized models, works with the left hemisphere. Yantra as a symbol represents a particular energy which is related with a particular state of awareness. For instance, a Kali Yantra not only portrays Kali through abstract symbols but is a symbolic projection of the energy that Kali represents or personifies. So the yantra, because of its symbolic nature, also works with the left hemisphere, whereas its geometrical construction triggers the right hemisphere. (See Figure 3.)

Sometimes in the outermost band of the yantra all the *matrikas* (letters of the alphabet) are inscribed, forming the mantra appropriate for the deity to be invoked in the yantra.

This gives a yantra power to fuse all the dimensions into a state of oneness. The symbolism of yantra represents a universal pattern, and the mantra the cosmic sound. The combination of the two helps the sadhak to transcend the normal frame of reference and achieve a higher state of awareness, in which individual being and universal being are one. The dichotomy is resolved; both hemispheres are calm.

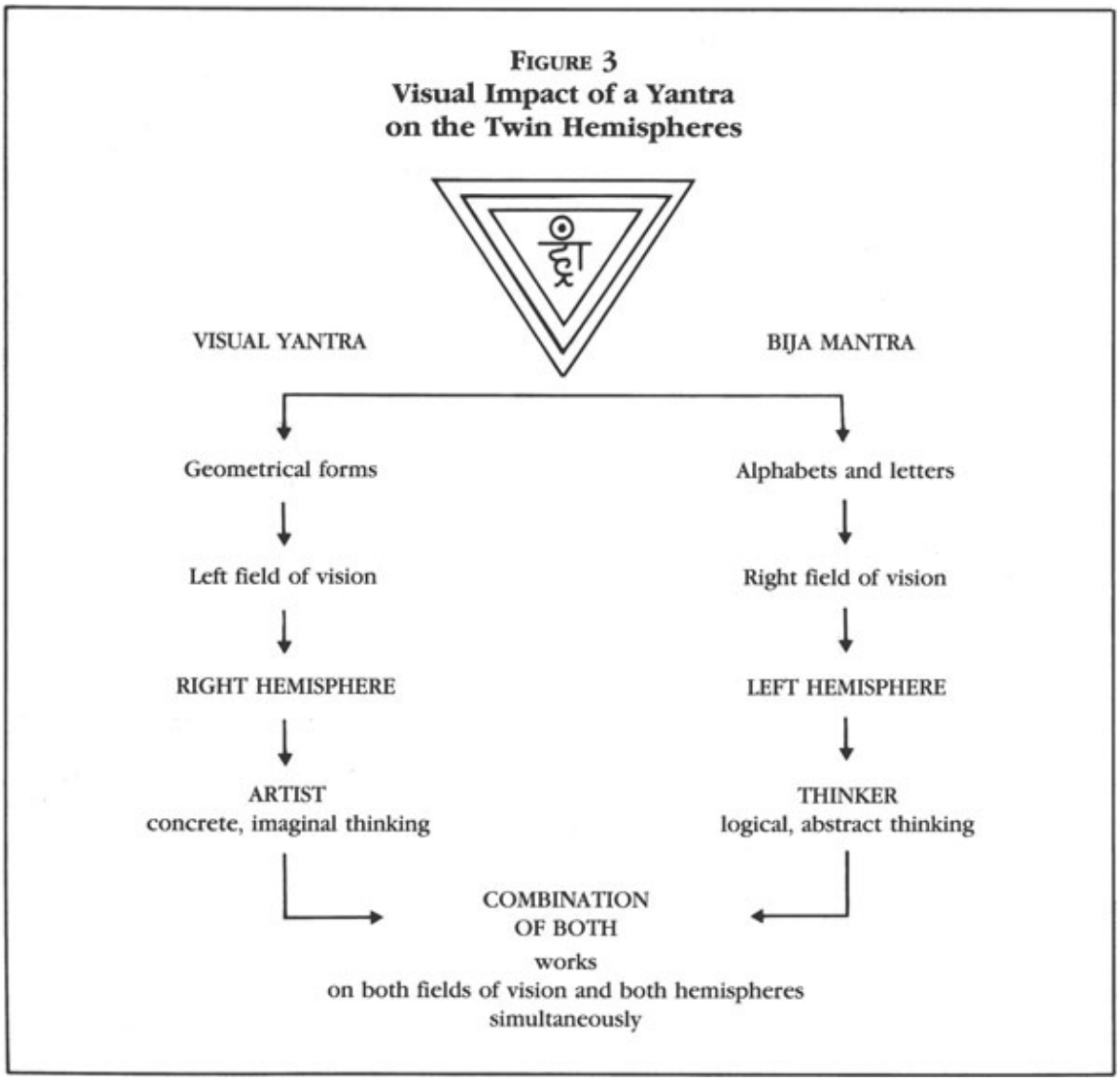
Recently it has been observed that Westerners are more left-hemisphere-oriented and are deficient in right-hemisphere education, which has caused some loss of their faculty of imagination and diminished their faith in higher values. They need more right-hemisphere education—art, dance, music—to establish a balance. By coloring and drawing these geometrical diagrams based on the mathematical perfection of sages of the East, Westerners can make both their hemispheres work simultaneously and calmly, achieve faith, and live in constant awareness.

THE GRAMMAR OF YANTRA

Let us now discuss the meaning of the geometrical patterns that comprise a yantra.

Generally a yantra is composed of a square on the outside with four projections forming a T-shaped structure, circles, a row of lotus petals, and some triangular forms inside the lotus petals. Sometimes there are two triangles overlapping each other, making a six-pointed star; sometimes many triangles are superimposed on each other in a pyramid form; and inside all these geometrical forms is a point or a sound.

As I have noted, yantras correspond with the internal structure of the retinal cells and geniculate cells. They must have been constructed with an intuitive understanding of the law of optics. It is because of this correspondence between the shape and size of yantras and the brain’s mechanism of vision that the yantras gain a universal quality and appear as archetypal forms throughout the world.



It has been observed that a line at 90 degrees to the line of reference almost never evokes any response. The eyes see it but do not respond to it in any special manner, as they do to a point, a circle, and a triangle. The square around a yantra thus evokes no special response and serves the purpose of restricting the field of vision. The circular patterns inside, which are arranged concentrically, affect the excitatory center cells. The geometrical patterns inside the circular patterns are symmetrical and invoke similar pattern images on both the right and left fields of vision, leading the eye to the central point, the centering place. Like the retinal cells, the geniculate

cells are concentric in construction and therefore have a circular symmetry. Yantras are also composed of patterns that provide symmetrical input and are thus capable of stimulating the excitatory cells.

The thickness of the lines in a yantra also plays an important role, as does the size of the point. The thickness of line, if increased beyond some optimal width, reduces the response of the ganglion and geniculate cells. Very thin lines also do not register very effectively. The lines in a yantra do not produce an ineffective response if their thickness reduces gradually. If the thickness varies irregularly, that is, not gradually, it produces an irregular response. If the thickness of all the lines remains the same, it produces a uniform response. It is always good to use the same thickness everywhere, except in the pattern that contains the point in its center. If the thickness varies there and the lines are thin in the pattern that is in the center, a uniform response is produced, and the thin lines in the center make the center more powerful.

It is a matter of individual understanding. The one who is drawing the yantra has to discover for himself or herself the suitable thickness for the lines composing it. Every person has a different sense of sight and a different field of vision.

An important factor in meditation is the distance of the yantra from the eye of the meditator. This is directly related to the receptive field of the retinal cells from the center of the gaze, because this will influence the response of the cells and will be different for each individual. Normally, reading distance is said to be the best distance at which to fix the object of concentration—the yantra—for gazing. This kind of steady gazing is called *tratak* in Sanskrit. Because the object or stimulus is outside, it is known as *vahiya tratak,* or external gazing without blinking.

The Point: Bindu

A point, called bindu by Tantrics, is the most powerful yantra; but it is too simple to say merely that a yantra is a point on a surface which serves as a field for gazing. The point holds a very significant position in the yantra and is the center of the drawing. The entire drawing is thus a projection around this center. The point signifies unity, the origin, the principle of manifestation and emanation.

Points are of two kinds: (1) a point having no magnitude and (2) a point having the smallest conceivable or practicable magnitude. A true point has no magnitude, but to have a point in concrete form, it is given the smallest conceivable or practicable magnitude. So although in theory a point has no magnitude, in practice it has the smallest conceivable magnitude. This point is the first step in bringing to the field of vision the abstract, the formless. Thus we see that this bindu is the point of origin and source of all symbolism—and the first and basic primary symbol of the energized consciousness, which becomes materialized through a process of gradual change. As it is said in the Upanishads: “God, being the immovable mover, the One behind all events in the cosmos, is the still point around which everything revolves.”

This point, which is still with the peace of love, is the nucleus of the cosmic yantra that is the phenomenal world, which is a combination of patterns evolving through the eternal dance of primordial nature. This point is the source from which everything is created and into which it all dissolves. It is a symbol of the Supreme Consciousness. When it projects itself, it brings forth the world of names and forms, binds them in one single stream, and serves as a link or uniting force.

Meditation or concentration on this point likewise works as a uniting force, a link, a Tantra, and brings the mind toward abstract concentration, which is used as a means to self-realization.

Bindu is also synonymous with semen or male energy. It represents static energy as well, as the unity between male

and female principles. A bindu has great metaphysical significance and is the point of union between the aspirant and the Divine: it makes the unmanifest manifest, and thus the aspirant is able to establish a relationship with the unmanifest.

The Circle

A circle is an expansion of a point. The point is the most condensed form of energy, and a circle is its extension. With the radius of desire, this point draws a circumference around itself and expands. This expansion is growth in dimension which broadens the scope of a point, yet it also imprisons the point as an individual unit, making an individual consciousness out of cosmic consciousness. Whereas a point is static, die circle is dynamic and represents the cyclic force. The point is beyond space because it is very compact, and it is the seed form of all the forms. A circle has space inside it, which is directly related with its radius. It is the radius of desires, which sets the static point in dynamic movement around its own self and creates a distance between the point, which is at the very center of the circle, and the circumference, which is expansion of the same point. Thus the point without magnitude acquires a form. This form is the beginning of all forms and has all forms within it. A point is the qualitative inside of the quantitative outside, that is, the circle. In its quantitative aspect this circle is known as zero. Zero contains in essence all forms within itself, represented in numerology by the numbers 1 through 9. After each cycle of 9 it becomes essential to bring this zero in combination with the next series of numerals to start a new series. Thus 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 form an arithmetical progression in which unity becomes diversified, but after 9 the zero has to appear in combination with the first numeral of the series to start the new permutation of numerals. The figure 10 is a combination of 1 and 0, and in the new series which starts after this, 1 is repeated continuously in combination with the numbers 1

through 9—that is, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Now the same point comes again, whereupon a new series has to start with the next number, 2. This process is never-ending. The circle thus represents the whole phenomenal world, known as *brahmand* in Sanskrit. It represents infinity, the beginningless beginning and endless end. It also represents space, which is all-encircling. In terms of the elements, the circle represents water. A circle with a point in the center represents the sun in astrological symbology.

The Triangle

A triangle is the simplest form after the point and the circle. It is composed of three lines, which is the least we need to make a pattern or form. In evolution, fire is the first element to have form, and the triangle represents the fire element (see Table 4). A line has a character of its own and is the shortest distance between two points. A horizontal line represents inactivity and stability. This forms the base of a triangle. Perpendicular horizontal lines represent movement and are least registered as a stimulus. That is, our eyes respond more to slanted lines than to perpendicular horizontal lines. Because a triangle is composed of two slanted lines meeting at one point and one horizontal line which forms a stable base line, it is a dynamic and eye-catching figure. Triangles in pyramid form offer great stability, as opposed to isosceles triangles, which express a dynamic upward movement. Both forms have been used in architecture, and it has been observed that pyramids, if aligned properly to magnetic north, can preserve things for a long period without decay. The pyramids of the ancient Egyptians and Aztecs are a wonder of architecture, and even now scientists are puzzling over their structural equilibrium, which offers much more than mere shelter.

Triangles can be upward-pointing or downward-pointing. Upward-pointing triangles draw the attention up and away from the world; they represent male energy. Downward-

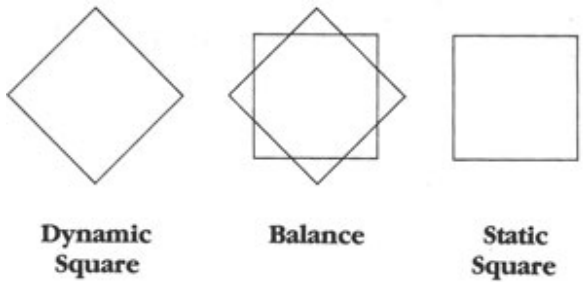
pointing triangles take the attention down and represent female energy. Equilateral triangles represent balance. A triangle in a circle in a square forms the most basic and simple visual pattern in yantra form. An upward-pointing triangle symbolizes Mars, the fiery planet.

The Square

A square represents the most practical use of space. The space filling a circle is most practically used in square form. The square symbolizes a materialistic attitude, stability, solidity, and stagnation. It is interesting to note that a square is made of four lines, two of which are vertical and two horizontal. Since horizontal lines represent stability or inactivity, and vertical lines represent movement, a square is a combination of the two and thus has a balanced, although prosaic, character. The lines are perpendicular, and it has been noticed by physiologists concerned with the visual functioning of the brain that such lines do not serve as a powerful stimulus to the eyes. They are not noticed by the eye or registered by the brain as much as slanting lines. This makes a square a pattern of great importance for yantra makers. Symbols placed in a square work dynamically because a square does not attract the attention and does not stimulate the eyes the way a triangle does. This makes a square the substratum, the base, of yantra drawings. It remains a neutral holder of form in the yantra pattern and is therefore very popular in yantras, forming an enclosure, restricting the field of vision, and defining the space of the yantra. This square is supposed to be the seat of the yantra, the foundation. It also serves as a pedestal. The use of square forms in architecture has created a whole new avenue for builders of the modern world. The square has great significance with regard to earthly awareness, for it represents the element earth itself: the four dimensions are the four directions. A square, a circle inside the square, and a triangle inside the circle, and a point inside the triangle make

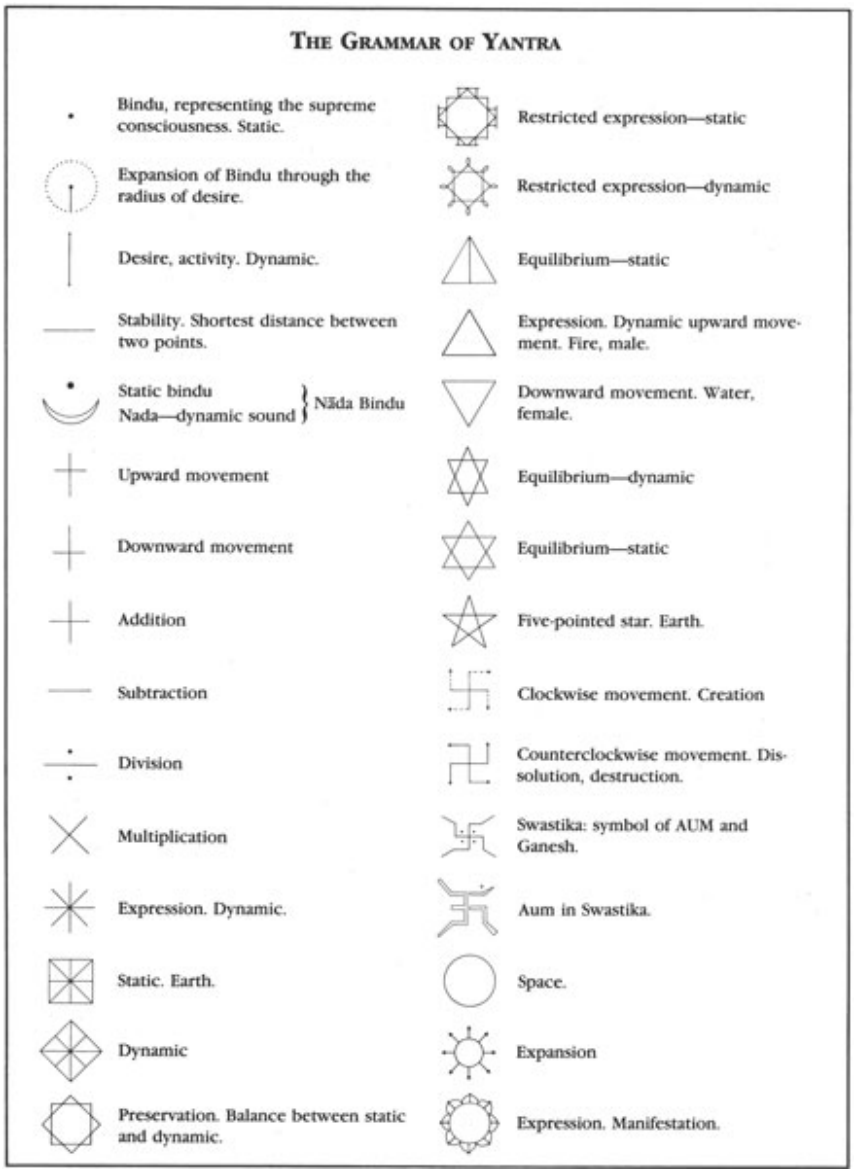
the most powerful basic yantra pattern, as seen in Tara Yantra.

To the square in a yantra is added a T-shaped form in the center of each line. The T-shaped structures are aligned with the four cardinal directions and are called the gates of the doors. These doors are sometimes open and sometimes closed; the same yantra may be drawn with open and closed doors by different sadhaks and Tantrics. These doors create a movement in the square. It becomes eight-dimensional and thus represents the eight directions and is called *bhupur.* The same square when placed with points upward, downward, and sideways becomes dynamic. Sometimes we see two squares superimposed in this form in a yantra. In Sarvatobhadra Mandala, a square with its points upward is used.



The Six-Pointed Star

The six-pointed star, known in the West as the Star of David, is a combination of an upward-pointing and a downward-pointing triangle. The upward-pointing triangle represents the element fire or male energy, and the downward-pointing triangle represents the element water or female energy. The superimposition of the two in a symmetrical pattern brings about a balance of the two energies. The star is very popular in yantras, and in many yantras the central figure is a six-pointed star inside a circular pattern of lotus petals. Sometimes there is a triangle inside this six-pointed star, as in Ganesh Yantra.



Lotus Petals

Lotus petals in a yantra usually appear inside a circle, which itself is inside a square—the bhupur. These lotus petals are known as the Chandra Mandala, and the circle outside is known as the Surya Mandala. *Chandra* means moon, and a mandala is a circular pattern representing the cosmos; *surya* means sun. Whenever this Surya Mandala is portrayed in lotus petals, the number of the petals is twelve, representing the twelve signs of the zodiac, which are twelve months and

twelve different states or changes through which the sun passes in a year.

The Chandra Mandala is shown with sixteen petals because the moon has sixteen *kalds.* (This word, *kalā,* is different from the word *kāla,* which means time. In *kāla* the first *a* is long, whereas in *kalā* the second *a* is long.) *Kalā* is synonymous with "beam" in the sense of a ray of light, but here it means latent energy. The sun is said to have twelve kalas and the moon sixteen. Surya Mandala therefore is drawn with twelve petals and Chandra Mandala with sixteen petals. Whenever the number of petals is neither sixteen nor twelve, the symbol refers to the manifested reality, which is eightfold. This eightfold manifested energy is the phenomenal world, composed of five basic elements—akasha, air, fire, water, earth—plus mind, intellect, and ego. A lotus represents purity. Its roots are in the mud, but the flower bears no stains of the mud and is pure. The individual consciousness also grows in the mud of *samsara,* but when it is pure, it is unattached to the world around it, unstained by the mud of desires and attachments. The phenomenal world is full of the mud of greed and competition, temptations that stain the consciousness. Sometimes the number of lotus petals is twenty-four, and then the lotus represents the basic twenty-four elements.[6]

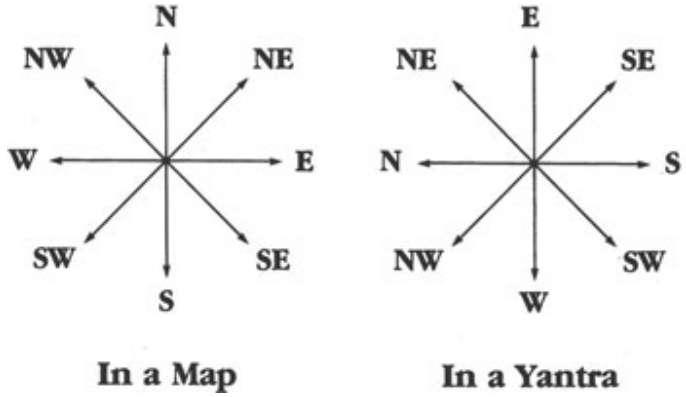
Concentric Circles

Concentric circles around or inside a triangle represent the three gunas: sattva, rajas, and tamas. When these circles are on the outside of the lotus petals, they represent the three modes of time: past, present, and future. The three aspects of time are encompassed in kāla.

An inexhaustible number of fresh yantras can be created by rearranging these basic forms or by reshuffling the mantras. With each new mantra combination, a new yantra emerges.

THE DIRECTIONS IN YANTRA

Unlike a map, a yantra has east at the top and west at the bottom, south at the right and north at the left.

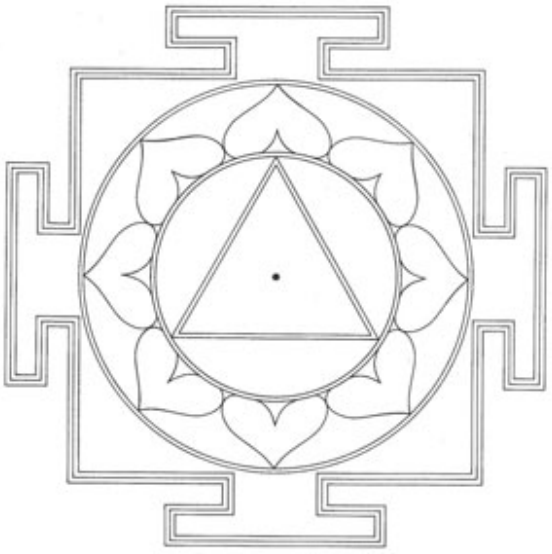


In Sanskrit the directions are termed as follows:

east: *purva*	northeast: *ishan*
west: *pashchim*	southeast: *agneye*
south: *dakshin*	southwest: *nairakta*
north: *uttar*	northwest: *vayav*

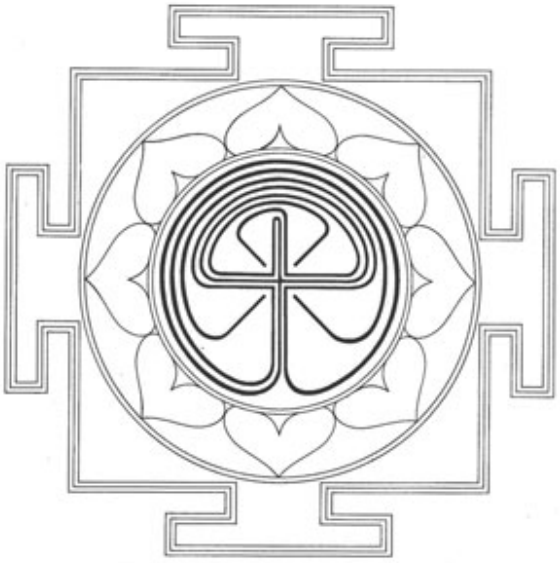
Each of the eight directions is ruled by gods and goddesses, and the symbols of these energies are portrayed outside the bhupur.

Varieties of Yantras



SHAKTA YANTRA

ASTROLOGICAL YANTRA



ARCHITECTURAL YANTRA

9	4	11
10	8	6
5	12	7

Mercury

11	6	13
12	10	8
7	14	9

Venus

7	2	9
8	6	4
3	10	5

Moon

10	5	12
11	9	7
6	13	8

Jupiter

6	1	8
7	5	3
2	9	4

Sun

8	3	10
9	7	5
4	11	6

Mars

13	8	15
14	12	10
9	16	11

Rahu
(North Node
of the Moon)

12	7	14
13	11	9
8	15	10

Saturn

14	9	16
15	13	11
10	17	12

Ketu
(South Node
of the Moon)

NUMERICAL YANTRAS

VARIETIES OF YANTRAS

Shakta Yantras

Yantras that represent any form of the Divine Mother are called Shakta Yantras. As Sati the Divine Mother manifested

herself to Lord Shiva, her husband, to show him her power, when Lord Shiva did not permit her to attend the great *yagya* (fire sacrifice) that her father, Daksha, had arranged. He had invited all the gods and subgods, rishis (seers), and maharishis (great seers) to attend, and he deliberately did not invite his own daughter and son-in-law, Lord Shiva. Shiva knew that Daksha did not invite them because he did not like Shiva. But Saint Narada persuaded Daksha's daughter to attend, saying that she did not need an invitation from her own father. She thus became convinced and asked her husband for his permission. Lord Shiva knew that it was not right for Sati to go, and he refused her permission—yet it was impossible to stop her. At that time she manifested herself in ten forms—Kali, Bagla, Chinnamasta, Bhuvaneshwari, Matangi, Shodashi, Dhumavati, Kamla, Tara, and Bhairavi (known as Dash Mahavidyas)—and left without permission. When she reached her father's house, she found out that she was not welcome there. Because she had come all the way to her father's house without her lord's permission, in shame and sorrow she gave up her life by jumping into the main fireplace where the yagya was being performed. Lord Shiva immediately knew what had happened and produced from his hairlock a great energy in the form of Vir Bhadra, who destroyed the yagya. Lord Shiva himself carried away the body of Sati and roamed about with it in grief. This disturbed the balance of the three worlds, and the gods and subgods requested Lord Vishnu, the Preserver, to help them. Lord Vishnu with his discus *(chakrasudarshan)* cut the dead body of Sati into fifty-one pieces (as given in *Shiva Charitra)* or fifty-two pieces (as given in *Tantra Chudamani*). Wherever on earth these pieces fell, that place became charged with the energy of that particular piece (part of the body of the Divine Mother), and these places are known as *shakti pithas,* "places of energy" where the Divine Mother is worshiped with her *bhairavas* (subgods or male counterparts of a female deity) under different names.

The Ten Forms of the Divine Mother. *Dash Mahavidyas* means ten different approaches to knowledge, or ten different dimensions of knowledge. In *Markadeya Purana* it is said, "All *vidyas* [approaches to knowledge] are different forms of the Divine Mother." And in *Lalita Sahasranam* we see the Divine Mother described thus: "She is all Tantra and all yantra."

Being the Mother, she is very much concerned with the welfare of all children, and whenever some evil force creates imbalance and disharmony, she appears in some form to destroy that evil force and establish harmony and balance. The evil forces also are her creations, but because of the misuse of their power they became evil. All *rakshasas* (demons) were great ascetics who, by performing penance, obtained boons, which gave them power. After achieving those powers, they became egotistical and began to conquer the three worlds, driving the gods and subgods out of the heavens, thus making it impossible for saints and virtuous people on earth to meditate and worship. For this reason the subgods and people prayed to the Mother, and she appeared in form to save her dear children. After the evil force was conquered, a reign of peace was ushered in, and saints and seers started meditating on that form of the Mother which had freed them from the clutches of evil. This meditation on her form gave them new dimensions, new ways, new knowledge. Each form is created by a binding force, a law (dharma), and through meditation that law reveals itself to the aspirant and visionaries, who afterward write scriptures for the welfare of humanity, expressing the fundamental principles and their experiences of that form of the Divine Mother—and it thus becomes a *vidya.*

TABLE 8
THE TEN MAHAVIDYAS

Shakti	Also Known As	Night for Worship	Vidya	Shiva
1. KALI	MAHAKALI	MAHARATRI	MAHAVIDYA	MAHAKAL
2. TARA		KRODH RATRI	SHRI VIDYA	AKSHOBHA
3. SHODASHI	TRIPUR SUNDARI	DIVYA RATRI	SIDDHA VIDYA	KAMESHWARA
4. BHUVANESHWARI	RAJRAJESHWARI	SIDDHA RATRI	SIDDHA VIDYA	TRAYAMBAK
5. CHINNAMASTA	CHINNA	VIR RATRI	SHUDDHA VIDYA	KABANDH
6. BHAIRAVI	TRIPUR BHAIRVI	KAL RATRI	SIDDHA VIDYA	KAL BHAIRAV (DAKSHINAMURTI)
7. DHUMAVATI	ALAKSHMI	DARUN RATRI	SHUDDHA VIDYA	WIDOW FORM—NO SHIVA
8. BAGLA MUKHI	BALGA MUKHI	VIR RATRI	SIDDHA VIDYA	EIKVAKTRA MAHARUDRA
9. MATANGI	MATANGI	MOHA RATRI	SHUDDHA VIDYA	MATANG
10. KAMLA	LAKSHMI	MAHARATRI	SHUDDHA VIDYA	SADASHIV/VISHNU

The Cosmic Mother exists in such forms as Saraswati (goddess of knowledge and fine arts), Lakshmi (goddess of wealth, peace, and prosperity), Gayatri (goddess of light, also called Vedmata, Mother of the Vedas), Durga (the unconquerable), Tripur Sundari (also known as Shodashi, the young and beautiful one), An-napurna (goddess of grains), and so on. But the Dash Mahavidyas are her ten cosmic forms in which she has manifested herself in different yugas and on different occasions—each form suitable for the destruction of the evil force—and are her forms before she again became Uma, the wife of Lord Shiva.

The ten forms in which she appeared on different occasions are represented by ten different yantras. These yantras are given here and can be used as a tool to enter into the ten different dimensions of knowledge.

Each Mahavidya is connected with her male counterpart—Shiva—and a special night on which she should be worshiped. In India these nights are celebrated as important times, and Tantrics spend this time invoking powers and doing japa.

Mantras related to each Mahavidya are as follows.

1. Kali Mantra:

KRING KRING KRING
HING HRING DAKSHINE KALIKE
KRING KRING KRING HRING HRING
HUNG HUNG SWAHA.

2. Tara Mantra:

AING AUNG HRING
KRING HUM PHAT.

3. Shodashi Mantra:

HRING KA AE EE
LA HRING HA SA KA HA LA
HRING SA KA LA HRING.

4. Bhuvaneshwari Mantra:

HRING.

5. Cbinnamasta Mantra:

SHRING HRING KLING AING
VAJRAVAIROCHNIYE
HUNG HUNG PHAT SWAHA.

6. Tripur Bhairavi Mantra:

HASAIN HASKARING HASAIN.

7. Dhumavati Mantra:

DHUNG DHUNG
DHUMAVTI THAH THAH.

8. Bagla Mukhi Mantra:

AUM HRING BAGLAMUKHI SARVA

DUSHTANAM VAVACHAMUKHAM
ISTAMBHAY JIVHAMKEELAY
BUDDHINASHAY
HRING AUM SWAHA.

9. Matangi Mantra:

AUM HRING KLING HING
MATANGAIYE PHAT SWAHA.

10. Kamla Mantra:

AUM AING HING
SHRING KLING HASSAU
JAGATPRASUTAYEI NAMAH.

In addition, there is a Durga Yantra (AUM HRING DUNG DURGAYE NAMAH) as well as many other Shakta Yantras, including Saraswati Yantra, Gayatri Yantra, and so forth.

Vaishnava Yantras

Vaishnava yantras are related to Vishnu and do not belong to the Mother-worshiping Shakta tradition. They include Ram Yantra, Vishnu Yantra, Shri Gopal Yantra, and Hunuman Yantra. In most cases their forms are identical to some of the Shakta Yantras, but the colors differ. This is also true of the Shaiva Yantras.

Shaiva Yantras

Shaiva yantras are related to Shiva and the Shaiva tradition: Bhairav Yantra, Maha Mrityunjaya Yantra, and Mritsanjivni Yantra.

Architectural Yantras

Architectural yantras are used for the ground plans of temples. They also include Mandala Yantras and Chatra

Yantras. Mandala Yantras are to be engraved on the roof and Chatra Yantras on the top of the seat of the goddess.

Astrological Yantras

Astrological yantras are used in working with the energy of the nine planets: sun, moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu (the north node of the moon, known as Dragon's Head), and Ketu (the south node of the moon, known as Dragon's Tail).

Numerical Yantras

Numerical yantras are composed not of basic geometrical forms but of numbers. Some of them are composed as magic squares and are used as talismans. The yantras composed by numbers are most popular and are used by Tan-tries for all kinds of purposes.

The yantras composed of geometrical forms are divided into two categories:

1. Bij Mantra Yukta: those yantras in which the bij sound is engraved or written in the center.
2. Mantra Varna Yukta: those yantras in which the Sanskrit letters are put in an order to create the mantra. In this type of yantra the alphabet can be arranged in bhupur (square form) or in the circular petals form; in the center is the Bij Mantra.

Then there are numerical yantras classed according to their forms:

1. Bhu-Prashtha Yantras: engraved or drawn on a flat surface.
2. Meru-Prashtha Yantras: three-dimensional form composed of metal or stone or gem-stones and shaped like a pyramid, having a broad base and narrowing gradually toward the top like a mountain (*meru*).

3. Patal Yantra: deeply engraved—exactly the reverse of the pyramid yantra.
4. Meru-Prastar Yantra: composed of pieces that are glued or welded to each other instead of being one solid piece.

THE WORK OF YANTRAS

Almost all the functions that are performed by mantra are done also by yantra. The only difference is that the mantras can be used without yantras, but yantras are of no use without mantras. The same yantra can be used for different purposes by changing the mantra or by adding some more words or bij sounds; but in any case, a mantra is a must with a yantra.

The mantra sadhak may use an idol, a picture, a flower, or a lamp as a centering device along with his or her mantra japa instead of a yantra. The yantra is an abstract way of depicting the deity, whereas an idol or picture depicts it in human or semihuman form. The yantra is more powerful as a centering device because it is based on fixed laws of geometry. But *pranapratishtha,* the invoking of prana (vital life force) of the deity, is necessary for a yantra or an idol, and this is done with the help of mantras. *Mantra is the deity himself, and yantra is the body of the deity.* The deity is installed in the yantra by mantra. This process is invocation, or pranapratishtha.

Yantras are used mostly for six purposes, which I have discussed earlier in connection with mantras:

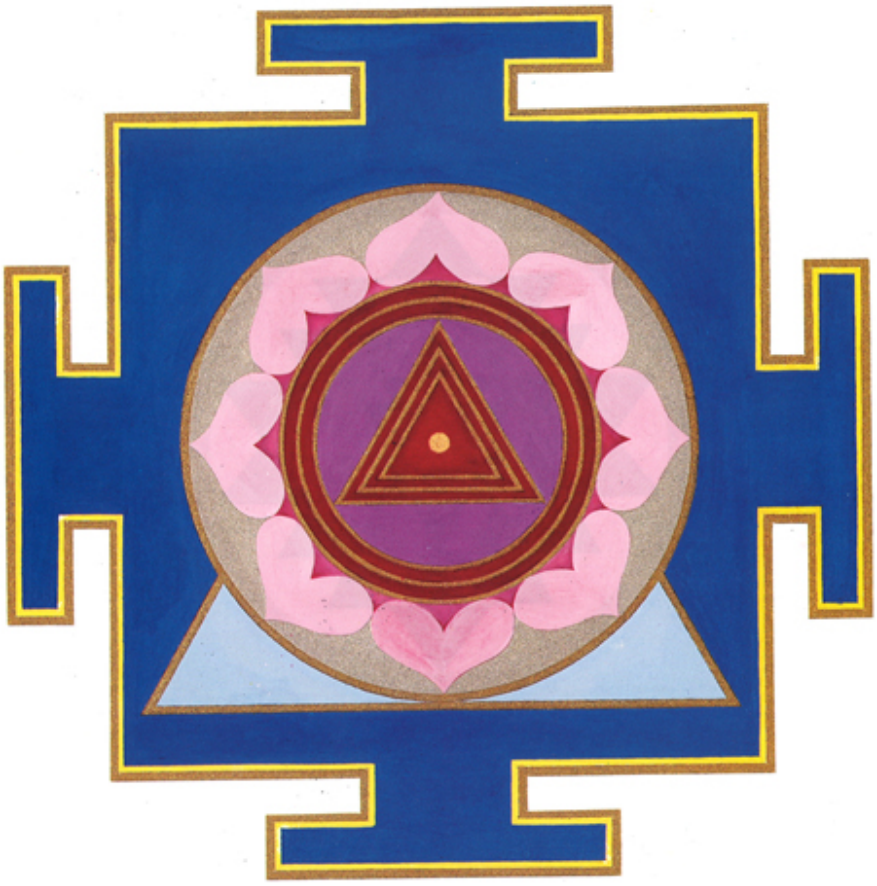
1. Shanti Karma: peaceful tasks
2. Akarshan: attracting
3. Vashikaran: enslaving
4. Istambhan: stopping or paralyzing
5. Uchchatan: distracting
6. Maran: bringing an end to the physical form

Plate 5

SHRI YANTRA

श्री यन्त्र

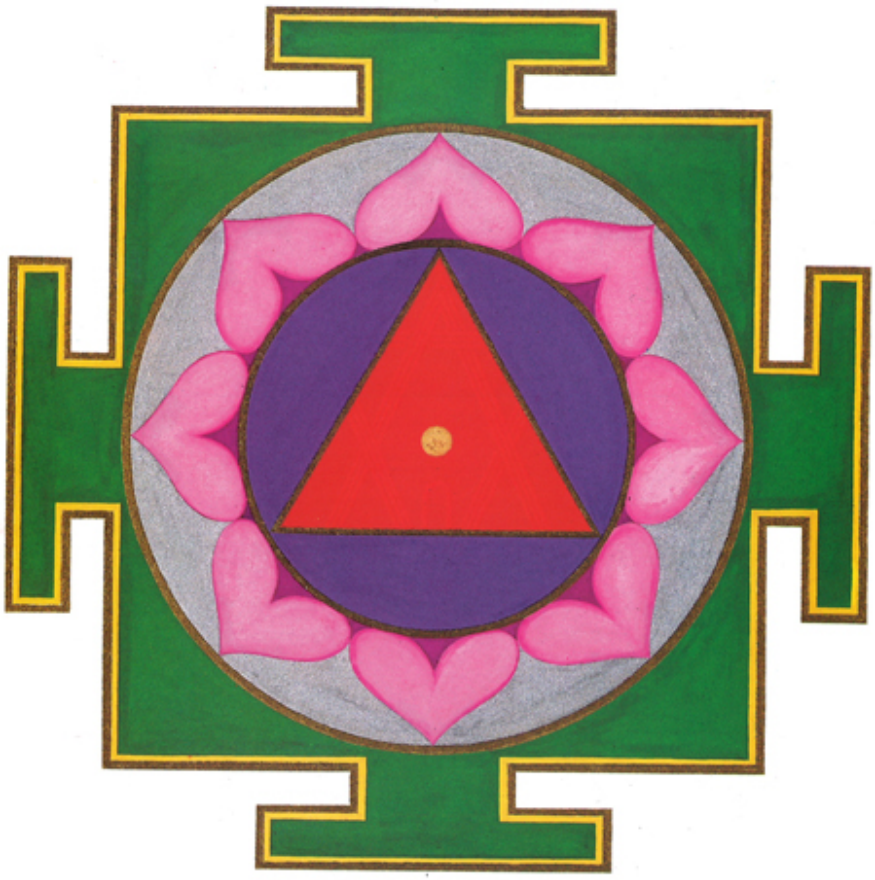
Plate 6



KALI

काली यन्त्र

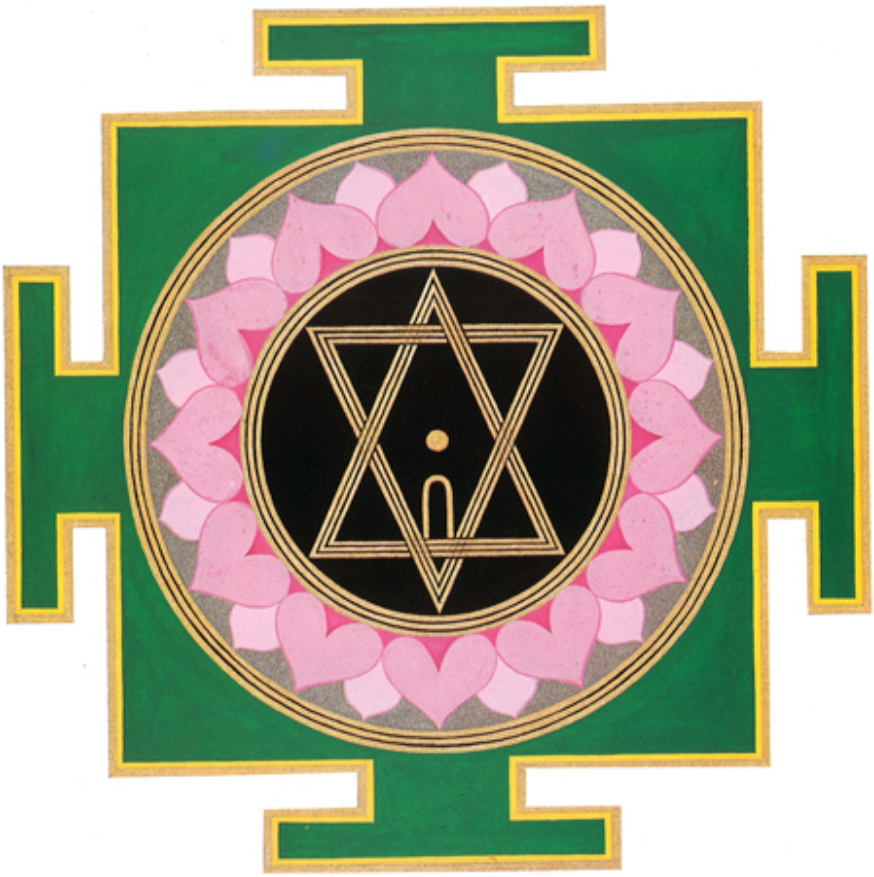
Plate 7



TARA

तारा यन्त्र

Plate 8



TRIPUR SUNDARI
(Shodashi)
त्रिपुरसुन्दरी/शोडषी यन्त्र

YANTRAS AND THE ELEMENTS

The elements produce different effects in yantra sadhana. We have already noted that the elements appear and disappear in the body during each cycle of breath, when the breath is flowing from the right or left nostril. Any yantra worship starting in a particular element enriches the sadhak with the character of that element.

Earth gives stability, patience, inspiration, mental quietness, physical comforts, and success in sadhana.

Water gives respect, love, satisfaction, knowledge, and alertness (activity).

Fire gives excitement, a hurrying nature, obstacles, destructive tendencies, and mental problems. This element can be used for Istambhan, Uchchatan, and Maran Karmas.

Air, if it suits the nature of the aspirant, helps to achieve his desired goal; otherwise it brings craziness, bad name, disrespect, ignorance, and nervousness.

Akasha increases spiritual elements, love of knowledge, and spirituality. It opens the mind to receive knowledge and increases intuition, the power of contemplation, and a desire to be alone.

The best element for yantra and mantra sadhana is earth, and the second best is water. Akasha also is good, but fire should be used only for hard tasks and air only if it is suitable.

LAWS FOR CONSTRUCTING YANTRAS

Time

The time of year indicated by month, the constellation connected with the month, the lunar date, and the day of the week play an important role in the construction of a yantra. Selecting the right occasion makes the work easy and guarantees success. The selection of time is directly related to the nature of the work for which the yantra is constructed.

For happiness, peace, prosperity, longevity, purification of a place (house or workplace), and achievement of wealth, April and September are supposed to be the best months. They correspond to the Hindu months Vaisakh and Ashwin.

For the siddhi of a mantra and for spiritual growth, October and November (Kartik and Margshi) are best.

For all kinds of desires and achievements in worldly and spiritual fields, February and March (Phalgun and Chaitra) are suitable.

Constellation (Nakshatra)

For knowledge:

Kshatbhikha, Uttraphalguni, Rohini

For achieving wealth:

Hast, Punarvasu, Purva Phalguni

For name, fame, and respect:

Mul, Revati, Uttra Bhadrapada

For peace, prosperity, and happiness:

Ashvini, Mrigshira, Purva Bhadrapad

For removing suffering:

Magha

For maran and uchchatan:

Pushya, Chitra, Swati

See Table 9 for English month equivalents. The Roman numerals denote one or more of the four steps *(charan)* of the *nakshatras.* Each nakshatra is divided into these four parts, and the lines indicate how many parts of that particular nakshatra are connected with a given month. The rest are accomplished in the following month.

TABLE 9
NAKSHATRA: 4 CHARAN
(CONSTELLATION: 4 STEPS)

1. ASHVINI	IIII	
2. BHARNI	IIII	21 March to 20 April
3. KRITKA	I	
KRITKA	III	
4. ROHINI	IIII	21 April to 20 May
5. MRIGSHIRA	II	
MRIGSHIRA	II	
6. ADRA	IIII	21 May to 20 June
7. PUNARVASU	III	
PUNARVASU	I	
8. PUSHYA	IIII	21 June to 20 July
9. ASHLEKHA	IIII	
10. MAGHA	III	
11. PURVA PHALGUNI	IIII	21 July to 20 August
12. UTTRA PHALGUNI	I	
UTTRA PHALGUNI	III	
13. HAST	IIII	21 August to 20 September
14. CHITRA	II	
CHITRA	II	
15. SWATI	IIII	21 September to 20 October
16. VISHAKHA	III	
VISHAKHA	I	
17. ANURADHA	IIII	21 October to 20 November
18. JYESHTHA	III	
19. MUL	IIII	
20. PURVAKHAD	IIII	21 November to 20 December
21. UTTRAKHAD	I	
UTTRAKHAD	III	
22. SHRAVAN	IIII	21 December to 20 January
23. DHANISHTHA	II	
DHANISHTHA	II	
24. KSHABHIKHA	IIII	21 January to 20 February
25. PURVA BHADRAPAD	III	
PURVA BHADRAPAD	I	
26. UTTRA BHADRAPAD	IIII	21 February to 20 March
27. REVTI	IIII	

Lunar Dates (Tithi)

For peace, prosperity, happiness:
7th day of the ascending moon cycle
For knowledge:
2nd, 5th, and 11th days of the ascending moon cycle
For wealth, favor from the ruling body (government), destroying enemies, and for all kinds of siddhis:
12th day of the ascending moon cycle

In time of need, if one has to do something during the descending moon cycle, one should select dates from the first to fifth day of the descending cycle of the moon.

Days

Shanti Karma and Pushti Karma	Monday
Wealth and Vashikaran	Sunday
Increase in existing wealth	Wednesday
Knowledge	Thursday
For removing suffering	Tuesday
Maran and Uchchatan	Saturday

Directions to Face

The directions have their own effect on the human body. Tantra especially pays attention to directions, which are also present in the human body. Our front is our east and our back is our west. Our right side is our south and our left is our north. The left side is magnetic and female; the right side is electrical, male, and solar. Facing east helps us align our polarity, because then the body is in exact alignment with the planet Earth, which is good in the early-morning hours for performing all kinds of worship and meditation. Facing east makes our front, which is our east, face east—and then our back is toward the west, the right side toward the south, and the left side toward the north. The earth is a big electromagnetic body. The energy comes from the magnetic north and then flows southward. Because our Earth is a sphere, the electromagnetic currents flow not in straight lines but in sphere form, so the magnetic energy flows from north to east and then reaches south; there it gets converted into electrical energy and comes back to the magnetic north via the west.

Each direction is ruled by some kind of energy, or god. These gods help the aspirant who chooses the direction that corresponds with the energy of the lord of that direction. For ordinary morning and evening worship, facing the sun is

supposed to be very helpful. So morning worship should be performed facing east and evening worship should be performed facing west. Tantra advises aspirants to become conscious of directions and choose the one best suited for the job for which the yantra or mantra is used. The chart reproduced on the following page should prove helpful in this respect.

Nostril to Use

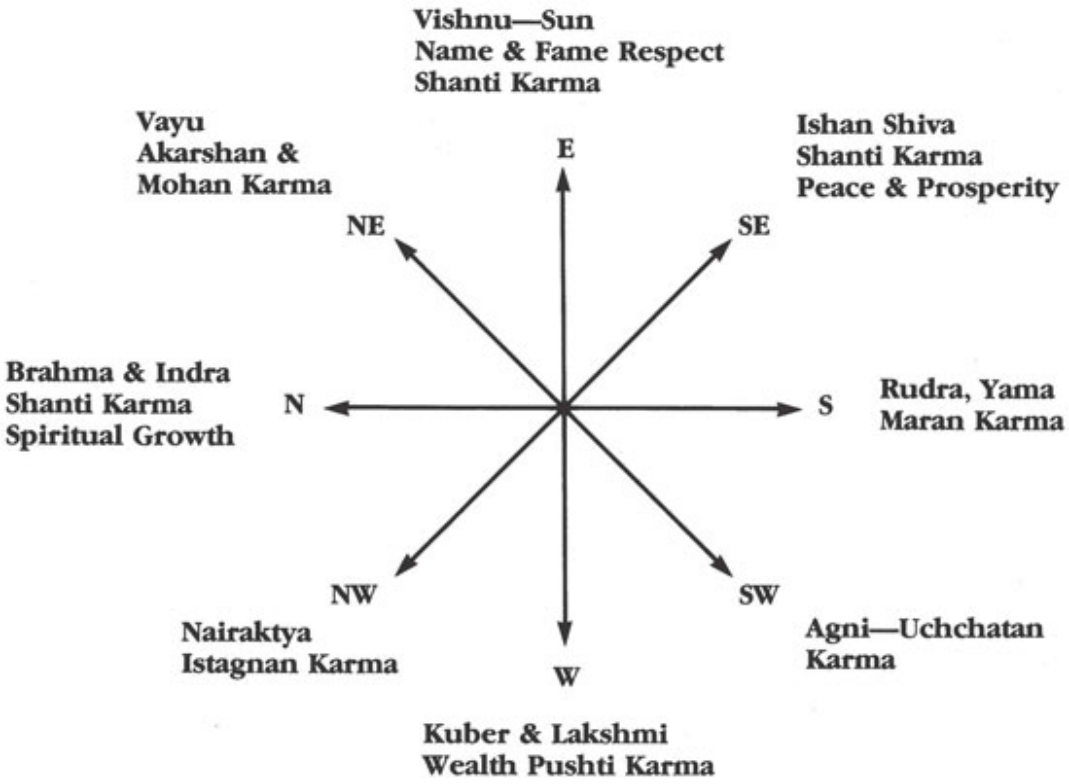
The aspirant should breathe through the nostril best suited for the task in question. Consult Table 3 on page 17 for this information before starting the mantra or yantra sadhana.

Pen to Use

For the purpose of worship with any special motive, the pen best suited for that job should be used.

1. *Shanti and Pushti Karmas:* pen made from the branch of a banyan or pomegranate tree
2. *Vashikaran:* pen made from the branch of a jasmine or mango tree
3. *Sammohan (Mohan):* pen made of gold (gold ink and gold body)
4. *Istambhan:* pen made of copper
5. *Uchchatan, Vidweshan, Maran:* pen made of iron

The pen should be about eight finger-widths long. *The aspirant should measure it himself*.



Ink to Use

In writing a yantra, the aspirant has to use a special ink, just as he is prescribed to use a special pen made from a certain wood or metal. An ordinary gold, copper, or iron pen will not work with these inks, so the aspirant has to have the pen made with the help of a smith. A pen made from the branch of a tree can be easily carved by the aspirant himself with the help of a knife. The inks prescribed are:

1. *Vashikaran:* kumkum (red powder)
2. *Akarshan:* kastoori (musk)
3. *Istambhan:* haldi (turmeric)
4. *Shanti Karma and spiritual growth:* chandan (sandalwood)
5. *Maran:* juice of datura plant (stramonium)
6. Uchchatan and Vidweshan: Burning charcoal from a crematorium

If *panch gandh* (five nice-smelling ingredients) ink is prescribed in yantra writing, one should prepare ink from the following five ingredients:

Saffron
Musk
Camphor
Sandalwood
Gorochan (red mineral crystals) or red sandalwood

Ashthagandh (eight nice-smelling ingredients) are as follows:

Agar	Sandalwood
Tagar	Red sandalwood
Gorochan	Kumkum
Musk	Saffron

Trigandh are the following three ingredients:

Kumkum (red powder)
Haldi (turmeric)
Sindoor (mercury oxide)

MATERIALS FOR CONSTRUCTION

Shanti Karma and Pushti Karma: crystal quartz, agate, precious stones
Akarshan: birch bark
Mohan: gold leaf or gold plate
Vashikaran: birch bark
Istambhan: copper leaf or plate
Uchchatan: iron plate
Vidweshan: iron plate
Maram: iron plate

If nothing else is available, use a clean piece of paper. For spiritual growth the leaves of a banyan, fig, or mango tree can

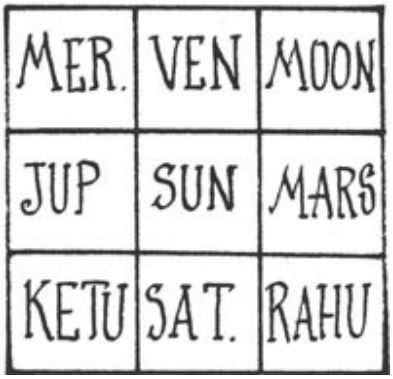
be used.

Yantras made of geometrical patterns and associated with a goddess should be made of metal for worship. Copper, bronze, silver, and gold can be used. Copper is for istambhan, so it is better to get it made on a bronze plate. If this job cannot be done by the aspirant alone, he should seek the help of a smith or anybody who can help him. At the right time—when the astrological constellations are suitable, on a right day, a right lunar date—and facing the appropriate direction, both the aspirant and the helper should sit down on the asanas after taking a purification bath and doing Pavitrikaram Mantra, the purification mantra:

AUM APAVITRO PAVITRO VA
SARVAVASTHANG GATOPIVA
YA ISMARED PUNDARIKAKSHO
SA VAHIYA ABHYANTAR SUCHIH.

AUM. Everything that is not pure becomes pure, and all things that are impure, wherever they are, go away.

Then the aspirant should write the yantra with the prescribed ink and pen on the prescribed material and give it to the helper, who, after meditating on the yantra and offering incense, should start the work of constructing the yantra on a stone or metal plate. When the yantra is completed, the aspirant should offer money and food to the helper.



Invocation of the nine planets, for worship of any kind. The planets should be invoked in this order, from left to right, with the sun invocation coming in the middle.

Yantras for worshiping are commonly made of wheat flour. Sometimes they are made with rice paste or with beans and rice, with or without the wheat flour.

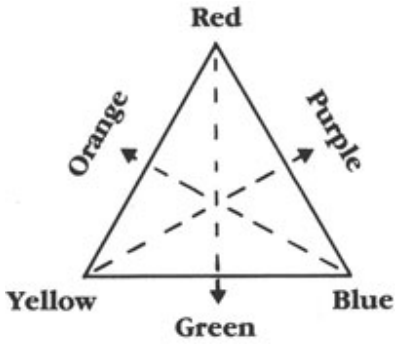
Before starting any ritualistic worship, the *navgrah puja* (worship and invocation of the nine planets) has to be made. A square composed of nine smaller squares is made by crossing two horizontal and two vertical lines (drawn with ink or wheat flour) at equal distances within the larger square, and filling the smaller squares with beans and rice, representing the planets in colors. Then the planets are invoked and worshiped. After this, the worship of the deity concerned is performed. Then the beans and grains are offered to the birds, and the wheat flour is formed into small dough balls and fed to fish.

For ordinary meditation the decoration of a shrine with yantras could be made by using art materials. Earth colors, opaque colors, or poster colors should be used. Colored yantras are mostly used on the *mandap,* or ceding, of the shrine. Then they are made with earth colors or engraved in stone and embedded with colored stones. The black and white yantras given in this book could be colored by anyone who wants to enhance the functional aspect of his or her right hemisphere (refer to full-color art for proper colors).

These yantras may not be used for any of the six purposes listed on page 58, but they may be used for meditation and as centering devices. The act of coloring will enhance the functional aspect of the right hemisphere alone because there is no bij mantra written in the yantras. But these patterns can help engraving the yantra on copper, silver, and gold plates, and then the yantras, with proper mantras, can be used for Tantric sadhana.

THE ROLE OF COLORS

Colors are frequencies of light and directly influence our body chemistry. Meditation on a particular color produces an influence of the complementary color of the color on which the aspirant meditates. There are three primary colors:



RED produces GREEN.
BLUE produces ORANGE.
YELLOW produces VIOLET.

RED is hot, vitalizing, positive magnetic, and stimulating to the adrenals.

ORANGE is warm, cheering, positive magnetic, and stimulating to the gonads.

YELLOW is hot, positive magnetic, and stimulating to the brain and nerves, and arouses optimism and love of knowledge.

The above three colors are all alkaline and astringent.

GREEN is cool, refreshing, and neutral, and has a restful effect on the eyes and an invigorating effect on the blood chemistry.

BLUE is cold and acidic, and creates pessimism, insecurity, and serenity. SKY BLUE has a calming effect on the nervous system.

VIOLET is cold and germicidal, creates antibodies, and increases resistance and acceptance. It is a color that appears in meditation.

Meditation on RED subdues basic instincts connected with the brain stem.

Meditation on ORANGE calms sensuality.
Meditation on YELLOW works on the cerebral cortex.
GOLD is SUN (knowledge).
SILVER is MOON (life-giving).

THE PLACE FOR MAKING YANTRAS

The place where yantras for worship are constructed should be as follows.

- Pure and lonely. It should be cleaned before starting the construction of the yantra, while reciting Pavitrikaram Mantra (purifying mantra, as given on page 63).
- Devoid of noise and exciting or sensual visual stimuli.
- Free of people or objects that create fear or anxiety.
- Not dark or in the open air. One should always sit under a roof or a shade.
- Properly ventilated, with free passage for the atmospheric air.

After the yantra is completed, the worship should be started and *the yantra should not be exhibited.*

Yantras on paper are made for *seeing* and are called yantras for darshan. They can be exhibited in shrines and institutions that teach spiritual sciences. Exhibiting yantras in art exhibitions and museums brings bad luck to the one who makes them.

At the end of each construction of a yantra for worship and at the end of each worship of the shakti, the following mantra should be recited:

SHARNAMBHI SARANAM
SIDDHA-VIDYADHARANAM
MUNI DANUJ NARANAM VYADHIBHI PITA NAM
NRAPATI GRAH GATANAM
DASYBHISTRASITANAM
TWAMASI SHARANMEKA DEVI DURGE PRASED

VIDYA SAMASTASTAV DEVI BHEDAH
ISTRIYA SAMASTA SAKALA JAGATSU
TWIEKYA PURITAM AMBAYEE TAT
KA TE ISTUTIH ISTAVYA PARA PROTITAH.
AUM SHANTIH SHANTIH SHANTIH.

I am in your refuge—You, the beholder of all siddha vidyas, the one who provides relief to all *munis* (sages), *danavs* (demons), and *narahs* (human beings), give courage to those who are going to confront a king and relieve the fear of robbers. I am in Your refuge, Devi Durga. [Here the name Kali, Tara, etc., can be used instead of Durga.] All vidyas are but your different manifestations, and all female forms are your form. You, Mother Amba, are fulfilling this universe. What can I say to praise you? How can I pray to you? You are beyond all praise and prayers. AUM, PEACE, PEACE, PEACE.

Directions for the Construction of Yantras

Illustration #1

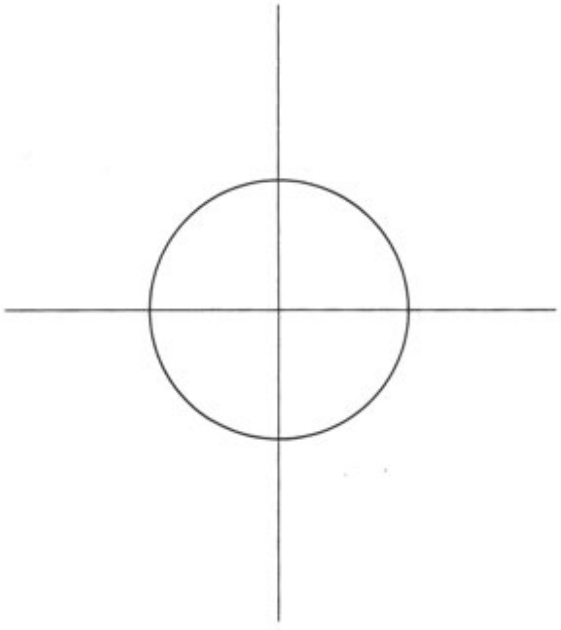
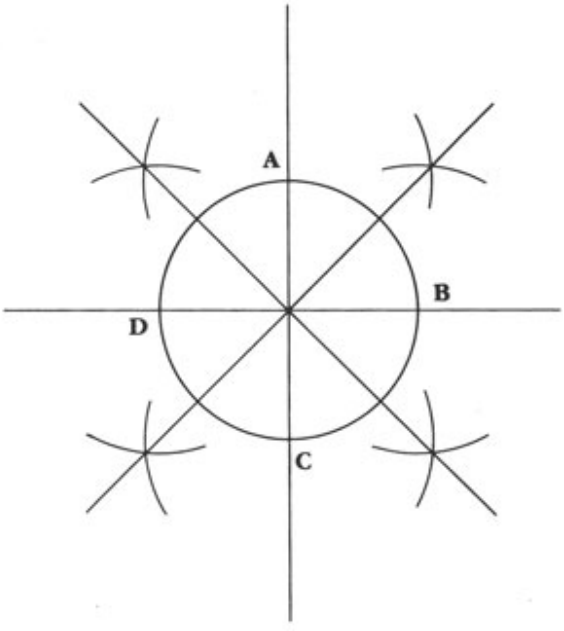


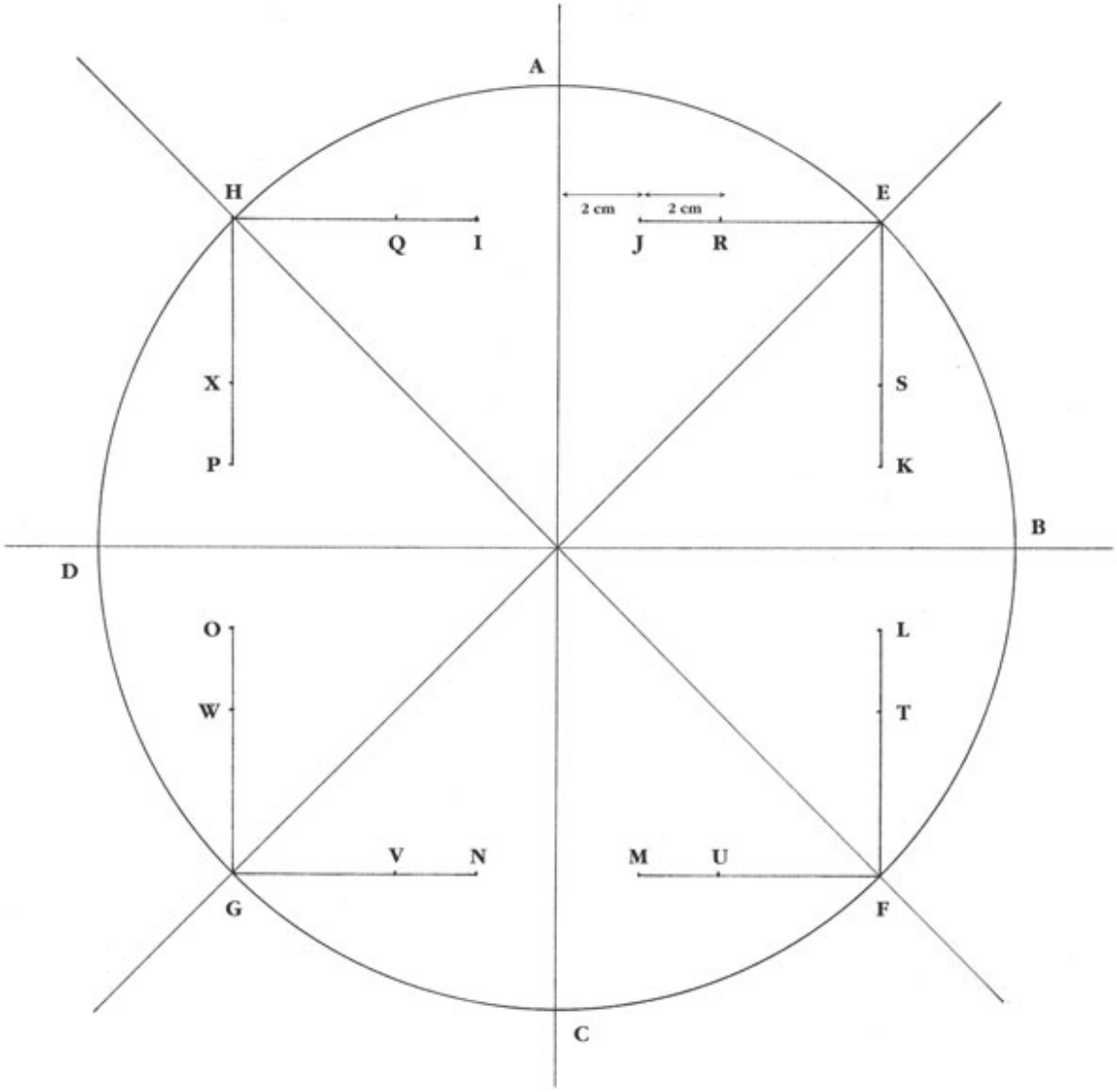
Illustration #2



1. Locate the center of the paper.

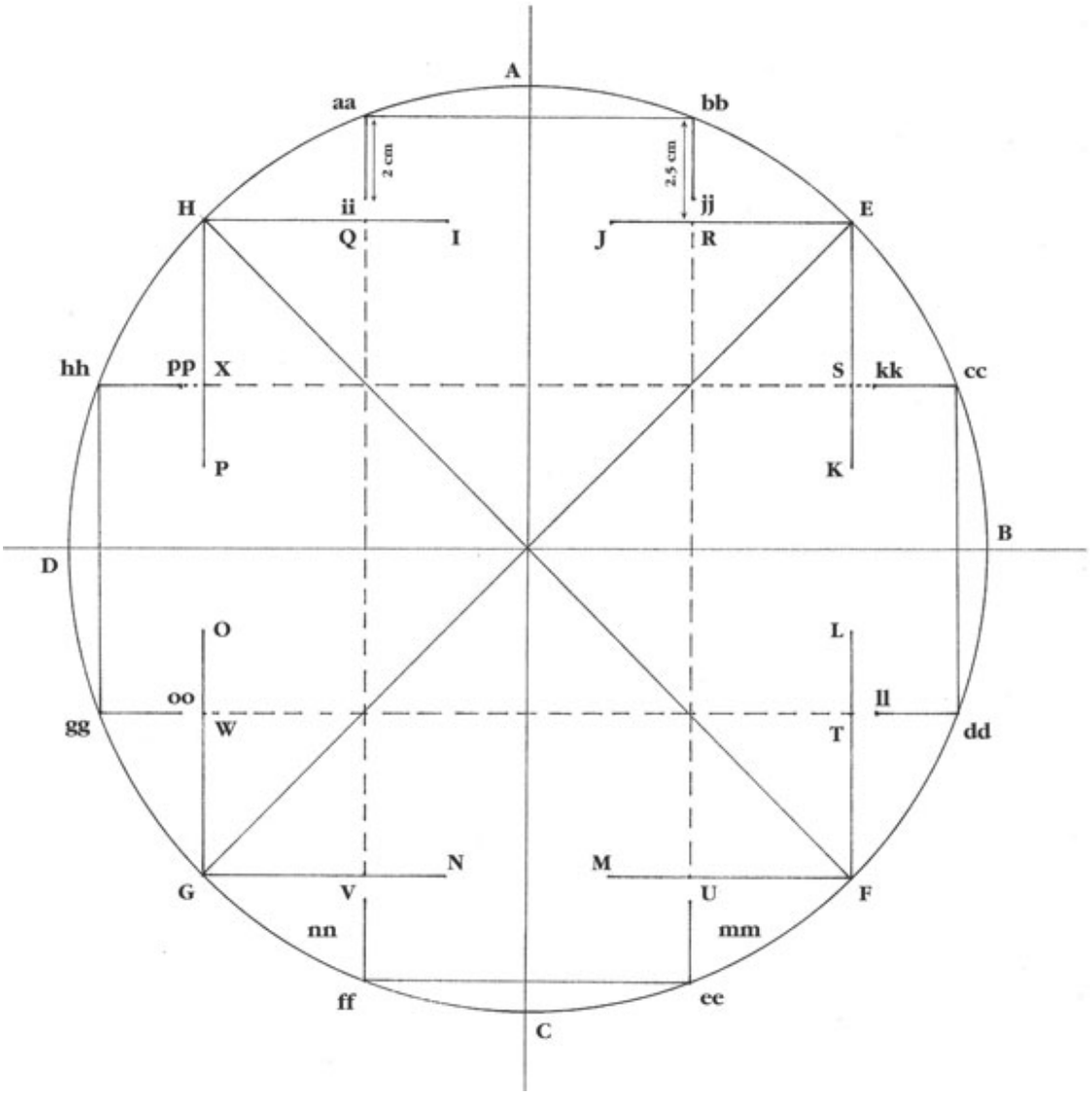
2. Draw a horizontal and vertical line through that midpoint.
3. Draw a small circle of any radius.
4. Bisect the four 90 degree angles with the compass as shown (placing the point of the compass on points A, B, C, and D respectively and draw the indicated arcs). Draw lines connecting the meeting points of the arcs through the center point of the circle, thus dividing the circle into eight equal parts.

Illustration #3



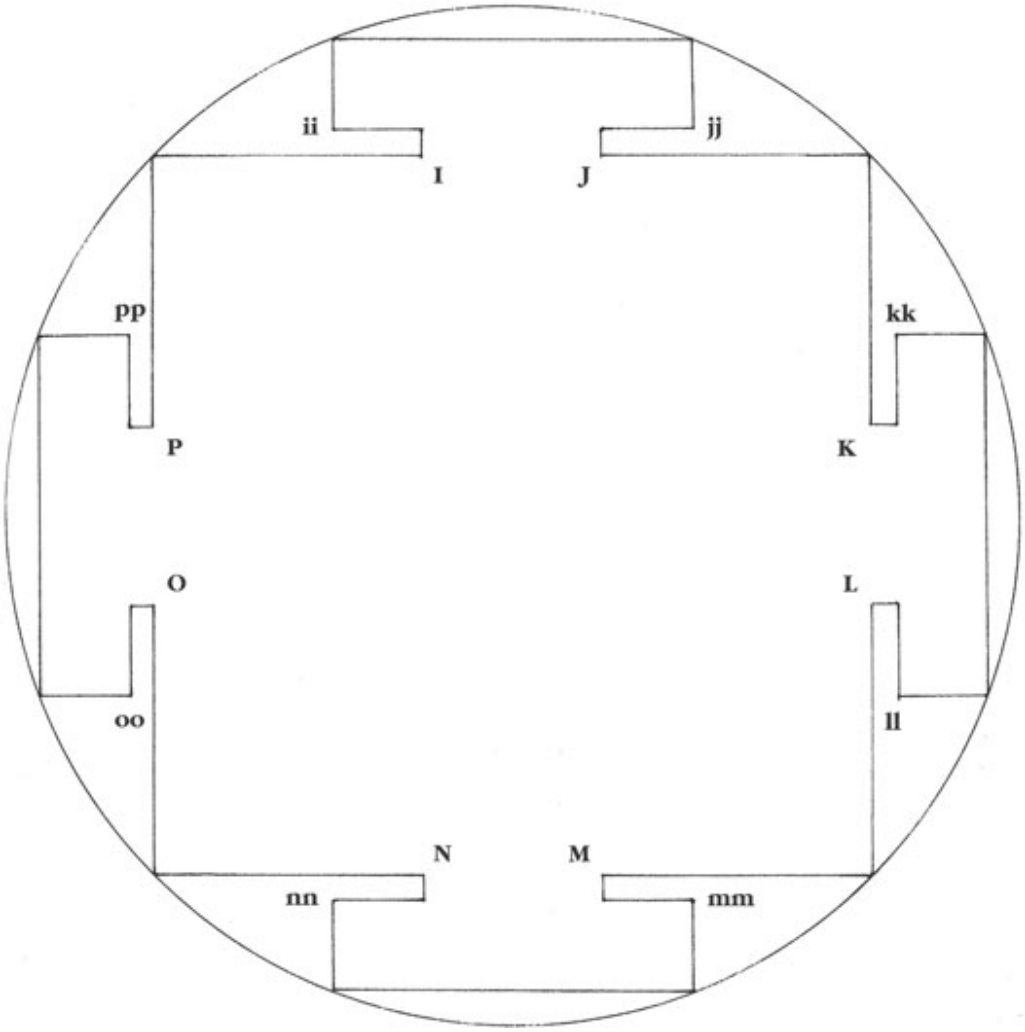
5. Draw a larger circle with a radius of 11.3 centimeters. (Please note, the accompanying illustrations are reduced examples.) Construct lines HE, EF, FG, and GH.
6. Erase the small central circle (see ill. 2) and all unnecessary lines.
7. Locate points I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P by measuring 2 cm from the horizontal and vertical lines AC and BD.
8. Locate points Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X by measuring 2x2 cm (= 4 cm) from the horizontal and vertical lines AC and BD. (Note that the lines HE, EF, FG, and GH are 16 cm. The lines AC and BD divides HE into 8 cm on each side. The points Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, and X are in the middle of the 8 cm.) Erase between IJ, KL, MN, and OP.

Illustration #4



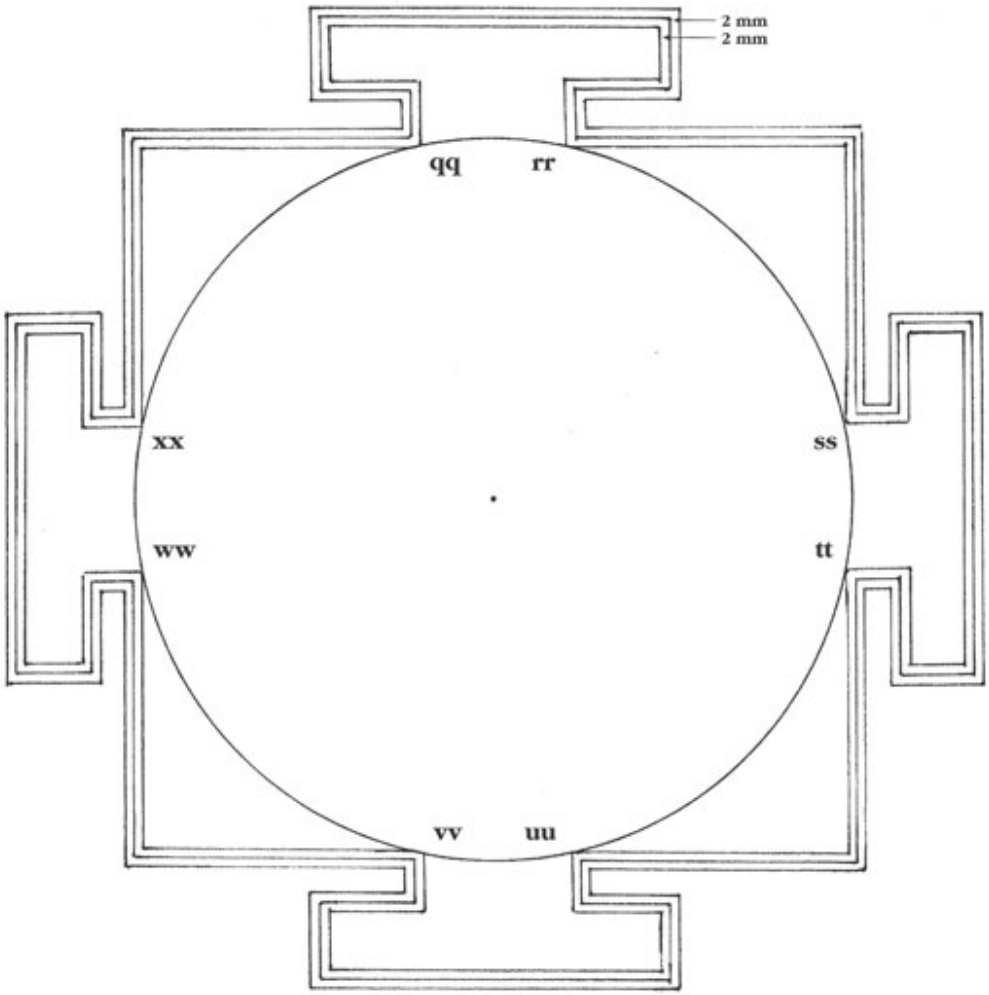
9. Draw lines QV, RU, SX, and TW and continue the lines up to the outside circle. This way the points aa, bb, cc, dd, ee, ff, gg, and hh are created.
10. Connect points aabb, ccdd, eeff, gghh.
11. Locate points ii, jj, kk, 11, mm, nn, oo, pp by measuring 2 cm from points aa, bb, cc, dd, ee, ff, gg, and hh. (Using a distance already present in the yantra increases the feeling of harmony. In illustration 3 the only usable distance is 2 cm.)

Illustration #5



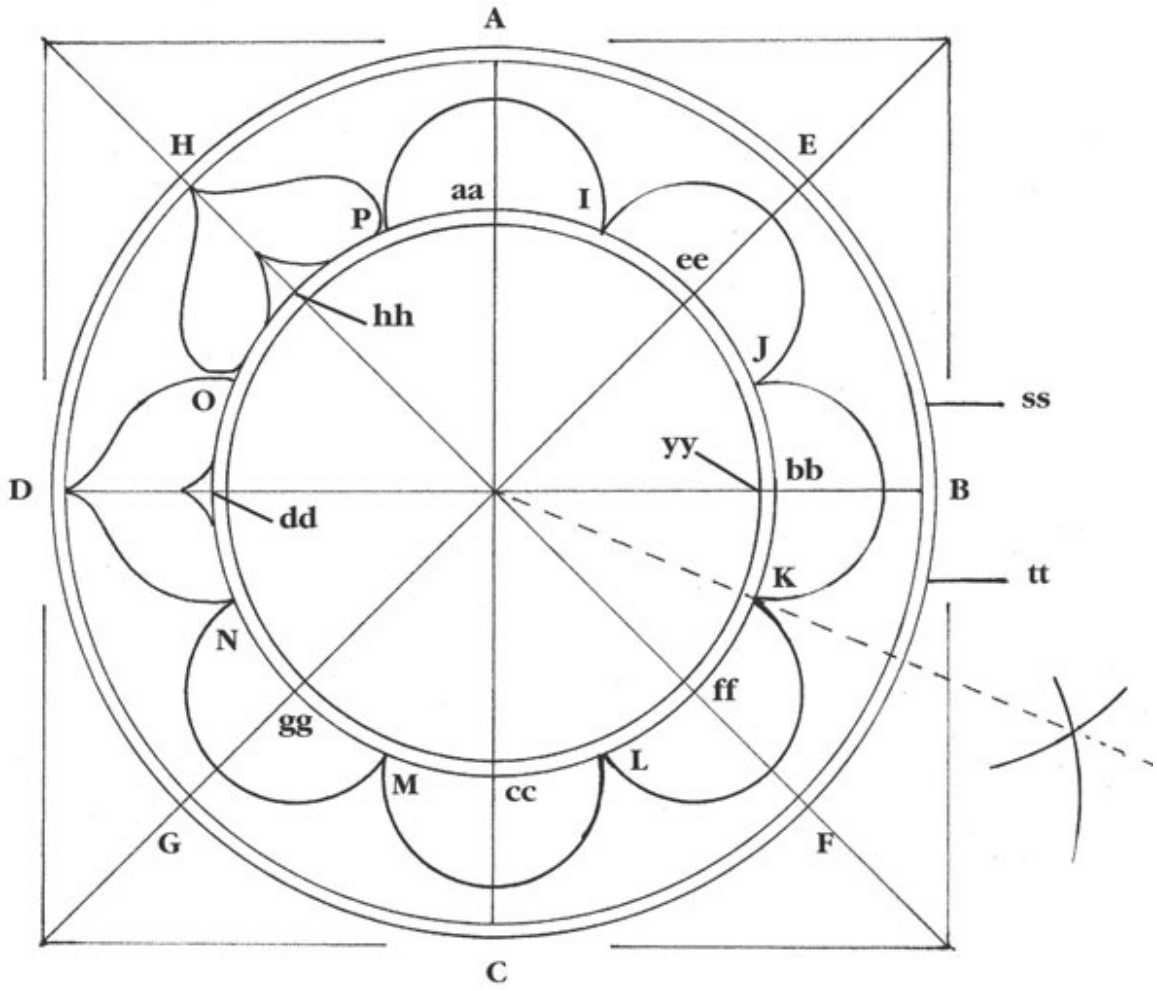
12. Draw lines iijj, kkll, mmnn, oopp.
13. Draw lines from I, J, K, L, M, N, O, and P up to the lines of those in step 12. Erase unnecessary lines. The gates of Bhupur are now ready.

Illustration #6



14. Draw inside Bhupur two lines with a distance of 2 mm from each other.
15. Make a circle inside the Bhupur touching points qq, rr, ss, tt, uu, w, ww, and xx.

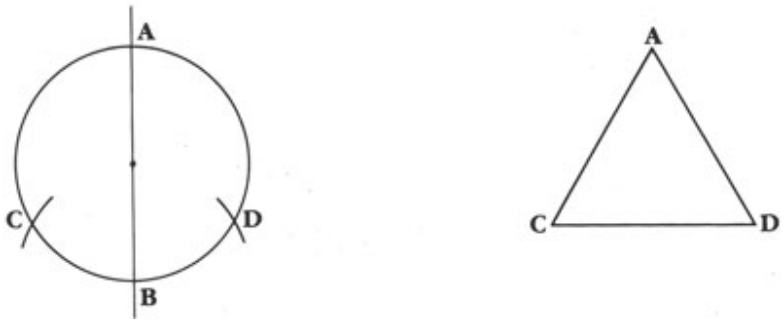
Illustration #7



16. Draw the inner circle. The diameter varies with the yantra. In this example we have used the inside of the gate (sstt). Put this distance from the most outer circle to the center creating yy. Make the inner circle going through point yy. Using a distance already present in the yantra (like sstt) increases the feeling of harmony.
17. Draw 2 more circles: one 2 mm inside the outer circle and another 2 mm outside the inner circle.
18. Locate points aa, bb, cc, dd, ee, ff, gg, and hh on the circumference of the inner circle.

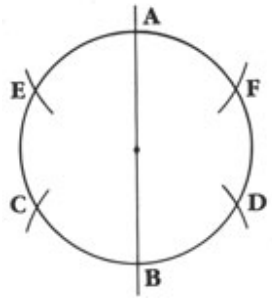
19. Bisect the angle fomed by points BF. This establishes point K.
20. Placing the point of the compass on point bb, draw a semicircle from point J to K. With the same distance on the compass placing on points ff, cc, gg, dd, hh, aa, and ee, draw the other semicircles (PI, IJ, KL, LM, MN, NO, and OP).
21. Convert the semicircles into lotus petals by making them into heart-shaped forms. Two examples are given. Lotus leaf D uses the semicircle NO. Following the semicircle, go from O to D. Do the same with ND. Then make a small triangle inside the lotus leaf. Lotus leaf H is made using tracing paper. Construct half a lotus leaf (OH), put it on tracing paper, turn around point hh, and trace the other half (PH). By tracing the lotus leaf a new leaf is created. Do this also on points aa, ee, bb, ff, cc, gg, and dd, turning the tracing paper each time.

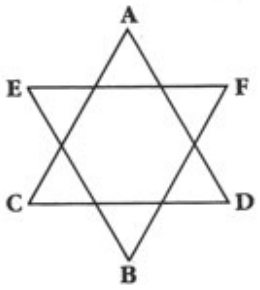
Illustration #8:
How to Construct an Equilateral Triangle



1. Draw a circle.
2. Draw a vertical line through the midpoint establishing points A and B on the circumference.
3. With the point of the compass on point B, locate point C and D using the radius of the circle as the measure of the arc.
4. Connect points AC, CD, and DA.

Illustration #9:
How to Construct a Hexagram





1. Draw a circle with line AB through the midpoint.
2. Place the compass on A and draw arcs E and F using the radius of the circle as the measure.
3. Locate point C and D from point B.
4. Connect points AC, CD, DA, BE, EF, BF.

GANESHA

GANESHA

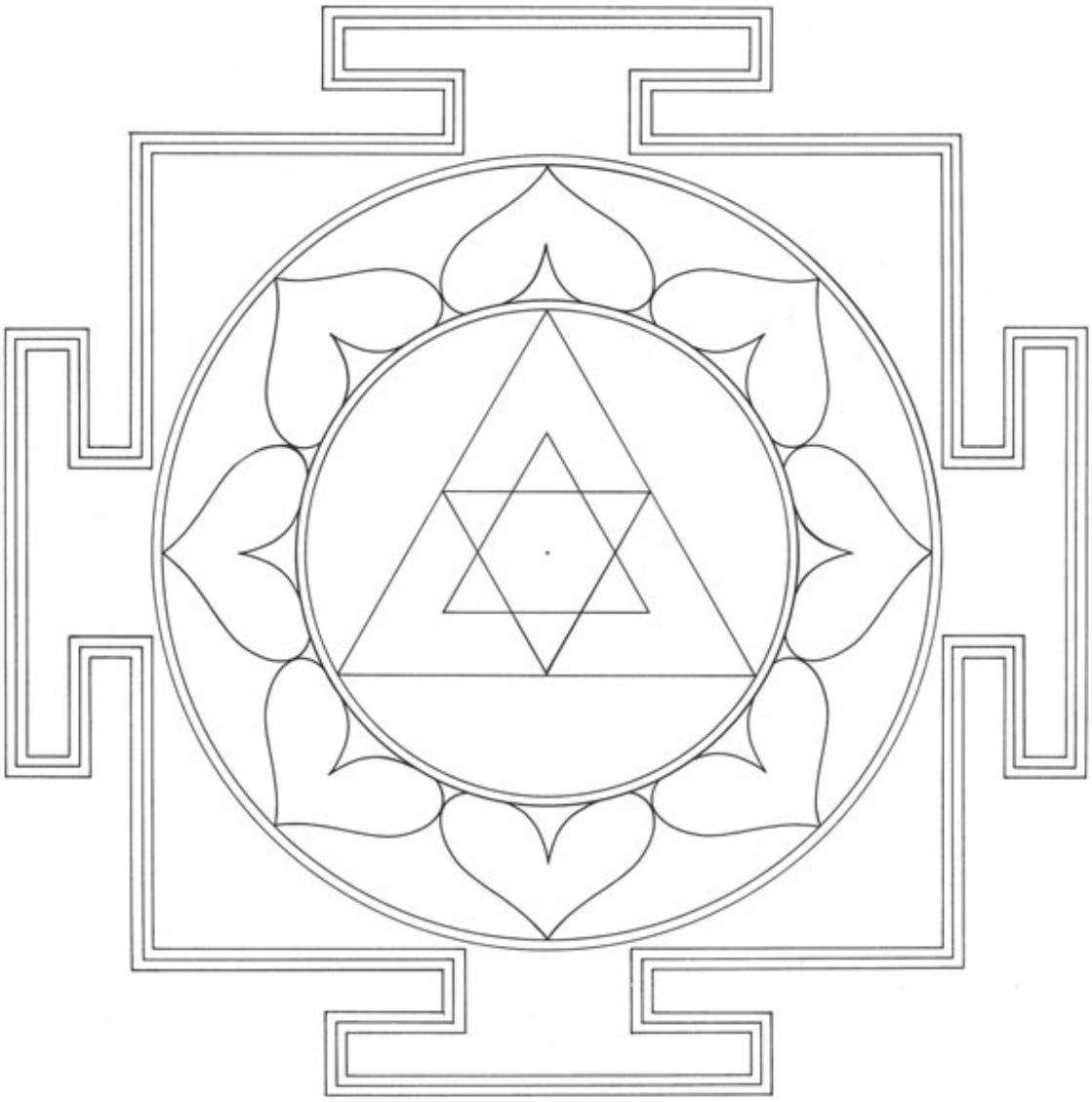
The name Ganesha is a combination of two words, *gana* and *isha. Gana* means all existing beings in names and forms, and *isha* means Lord. Thus Ganesha is the lord of all existing beings, that is, of the creation. “Ganesha” is a title given to the second son of Shiva for becoming the guardian or lord of all creation. All Tantric and spiritual worship in the Hindu tradition begins with an invocation of Ganesha. One of the most popular Hindu deities, he is propitiated as the remover

of obstacles at the beginning of every undertaking, such as taking a journey, building a house, or writing a book or even a letter.

Ganesha is pictured as a short, pot-bellied figure with four arms and the head of an elephant bearing a single tusk. In three of his hands he holds an *ankush* (hatchet), a *posh* (lasso), and sometimes a conch. Sometimes the fourth hand is shown in a gesture of granting boons, but more often it holds a *laddu,* a sweet ball made of chick-pea flour. His small eyes shine like jewels. He rides or is accompanied by a rat, who was once a demon whom Ganesha subjugated and then accepted as his vehicle. This demon symbolized vanity and impertinence. Thus, Ganesha subjugates false vanity, pride, egoity, and impertinence.

Ganesha's outer form may not be very attractive or acceptable to the rational mind. His animal head and short, fat body attract children, but for those who think of themselves as grown up, he appears laughable. It is very foolish, however, to let oneself be put off by Ganesha's coarse appearance, for he is the patron of people of fine judgment who are not misled by outward appearances. Those who cannot see the Divine in Ganesha and instead get diverted by his coarse appearance become a prey to the rational mind (the left hemisphere of the brain), which presents the greatest obstacle in the path of spiritual evolution. Acceptance of Ganesha as the Divine Force stills the rational mind and all its doubts, which are our greatest enemy. By the simple exercise of invoking Ganesha, by praying, paying homage, and surrendering to him, the rational mind is subdued and brought under control. That is why Ganesha is worshiped as the great obstacle-remover. Faith creates a powerful force, turning the ever-flowing downward energy into upward-flowing energy, and connecting us with the higher centers existing in our own body. Divine Ganesha is unshakable. He provides firmness to those who meditate upon him and invoke him at the beginning of all undertakings, worldly or spiritual.

The Puranas offer many versions of the story of Ganesha's birth and the origin of his elephant head. One story says he was formed from a cleansing unguent *(ubtan)* that Parvati, the Divine Mother, had removed from her body and that contained some of the dirt from her body. It is said that one day, as Parvati was about to take a bath, she found that the guardian of her quarters was absent. She took some ubtan, created a babylike form from it, and breathed into it the vital life force, prana. This child she appointed as her guardian, arming him with an invincible scepter and instructing him not to allow anybody into her private palace. The baby guardian followed all that his mother and mistress told him, and stood outside with the scepter in his hand. Exactly at that time Lord Shiva decided to visit his beloved wife, Parvati, and came seeking admittance to her palace. Barred from entering by the little boy guardian, Shiva became furious and threatened the boy—but the boy was unshakable, and it was only by ruse that all the demons and gods together, in league with Lord Shiva, overcame his resistance. In his rage, Lord Shiva chopped off the boy's head with his trident. (In another version of the story, it is Lord Vishnu who chops off the boy's head.) When the Divine Mother learned what had happened, she became sad and asked Shiva to bring the child back to life. Brahma comforted Parvati, and Lord Shiva went in search of the head of a child that he could fix on the body of the boy. It was night, and all mothers were asleep with their children in a deep embrace, so that Shiva was unable to chop off any head. But suddenly he saw a baby elephant sleeping beside his mother, back to back, and he seized the opportunity. Shiva thus took the head of the baby elephant, fixed it on the body of the boy guardian, and brought him back to life.



GANESHA YANTRA

Another one of the many versions states that Ganesha was born after Parvati was granted a boon for her prayers to Lord Vishnu, and the Divine Mother invited all gods and subgods to come and bless her child. All the gods came and dutifully gazed at the beautiful child—except Shani (Saturn), who looked down at the ground instead because he was under a curse from his own wife which caused any being that he fixed his eyes upon to be burnt to ashes. The Divine Mother did not understand this behavior and insisted that Shani look at her child and admire him. Shani told the Divine Mother about the

curse and refused to look at the child. The Divine Mother was sure that her child could not be injured by Shani's sight, despite the curse, so she again asked Shani to look at the child and bless him. The minute Shani looked at the baby, his head was burnt to ashes. The head of a baby elephant was brought by Vishnu, who traveled on Garuda (the eagle-headed god who serves as his vehicle) to find the head of the first available child, as was advised by the creator, Brahma.

There are many other stories about the birth of Ganesha from different *kalpas* (eras), but all the stories point to one thing: that Ganesha is a creation of the Divine Force, be it Shiva or Shak-ti. He is created to be a guardian or doorkeeper of the palace of the Divine Mother. Thus it is through his permission that one may reach the Divine Mother. He is the god of wisdom and prudence.

A very interesting and eye-opening story explains how this god became the patron of all ganas and assumed his title of Ganesha. Once upon a time, Shiva was the only guardian of the gods, subgods, humans, demons, ghosts, spirits, and all other existing beings. But because Shiva was always in a blissful state of *samadhi* (trance), the gods and other beings found it very difficult to communicate with him. Thus, whenever the ganas were in trouble, they had to spend hours chanting hymns and praying to bring Lord Shiva back to normal consciousness. They felt the necessity of having somebody else as their patron, someone who would be always available to them at the time of need, to settle their disputes and provide them with security whenever they felt threatened.

The ganas approached Brahma with their problem, but he was unable to solve it, so he sought the help of Vishnu to persuade Lord Shiva to appoint a new Ganapati (leader of the ganas). Lord Vishnu suggested that the ganas select either of the two sons of Lord Shiva as their guardian: Kartikeya (also known as Subramaniyam) or Lambodar (the pot-bellied Ganesha). In order to find out which of the two sons would be worthy of assuming the title of Ganesha, the gods and

subgods decided to hold a contest between the two. They set a task for both the brothers. A day, time, and site for holding the contest were decided.

On the appointed day, everybody came to watch the contest. Vishnu was appointed judge, and Lord Shiva and the Divine Mother Parvati were present, occupying the central seat. At the appointed time Vishnu announced the task to the audience and to the two brothers: they had to go all around the existing universe and come back to the starting point as soon as possible. The one who came back first would be appointed Ganesha, the patron of all ganas. After hearing the terms and conditions of the task, Kartikeya took his fast-flying peacock and flew off into space so as to travel the universe as quickly as possible. Meanwhile Ganesha remained seated on his rat and did not move. Lord Vishnu, seeing Ganesha making no effort, urged him to hurry up. At Vishnu's constant insistence that he join the contest, Ganesha smiled and paid his homage first to his father and mother, then to the other gods and subgods, and finally took off on his rat. All the gods and subgods were astonished when they saw that instead of heading for outer space, Ganesha simply rode around Shiva and Parvati, his mother, who represents the primordial Prakriti, the cause of all existing phenomena. After thus circling Shiva and Shakti, Ganesha came back to his starting point, bowed down to his parents, and declared: "I have completed my task. I have gone all around the universe."

"It is not true," exclaimed the gods and sub-gods. "You did not go anywhere. You are lazy."

Ganesha stood before Lord Vishnu with folded hands and said, "I know you understand what I have done, but to make everybody understand I will say this: I *have* completed my task of going all around the universe, because this phenomenal world of names and forms is but an expression and manifestation of the Divine Mother and my Divine Father. They are the source of all that exists. I have gone around the source, which is the Truth, the essence of all existence, all phenomena. I know this samasara [phenomenal world] is an

ocean of relative existence, that it is illusory—and it makes no sense to leave the Truth behind and go all around the illusion. My brother is still busy going around the illusory world of relative existence. When he reaches Truth, he will also reach the same Truth, which is the only Truth—all else is illusion, including you and me."

This statement ignited a spark of true understanding in all the ganas, who were astonished and delighted at its wisdom. Applauding his refined judgment and enlightening performance, they accepted the coarse-looking, pot-bellied Ganesha as their patron. While Vishnu was putting the mark of victory *(tilak)* on the forehead of the elephant-headed Ganesha, Kartikeya came back sweating and breathing fast. He became angry and challenged the victory of Ganesha. The gods then told Kartikeya about the subtle sense and wisdom of Ganesha and said, 'You went after matter, which is illusion; you went around the phenomenal world, which has a relative existence, and so you could not perceive the Truth directly."

Ganesha by his performance showed that the universe is but an extension of the Truth. Truth is the source. The phenomenal world is maya (illusion). Kartikeya realized that he had been fooled by maya, for all his running around the ever-changing phenomena was in vain, and he had exhausted himself for nothing—for a mirage. Kartikeya had behaved like all other mortals who look at the world of names and forms as reality and so get trapped by maya. He accepted his defeat, and the title of Ganesha was given to the one whose wisdom goes beyond material existence, whose approach is real, precise, and accurate.

Lord Vishnu also announced that from now on all ganas will propitiate Ganesha at the beginning of every undertaking. Those who remember him first and propitiate him will have no obstacles in their way: their path will become easy, and they will accomplish their work without difficulties.

Ganesha Yantra

The effect of meditation on Ganesha's yantra is to inspire the sadhak to create balance in himself or herself.

The bhupur is of a radiant green (viridian) as in Tara Yantra or Shri Yantra. Green is a mixture of hot yellow and cold blue, and therefore is very powerful; it is the color of balance. Meditation on this green produces its complementary color, red. Red, a color that is noticeable from a distance, is the color of life, inspiration, revolution, and freedom from rules and regulations.

The eight-petaled lotus of vermilion color represents the octave of prakriti (the primordial nature): (1) akasha, (2) air, (3) fire, (4) water, (5) earth, (6) sattva, (7) rajas, and (8) tamas.

The six-pointed star of light saffron color represents the balance created by the superimposition of one upward-pointing male triangle and one downward-pointing female triangle.

The yellow upward-pointing triangle in the middle of the six-pointed star represents the male sap, the elixir of immortality. The color of this triangle is the same as Ganesha's skin color.

The bindu, which is seated in the middle of the triangle inside the six-pointed star, is Ganesha himself. Meditation on this bindu is the main object of yantra worship. It is of a radiant golden color—attractive and soothing to the eyes.

DURGA

Durga in Sanskrit means "Invincible." The syllable *du* is synonymous with the four asuras (devils) of poverty *(daridra),* sufferings *(dukh),* famine *(durbhiksha),* and evil habits *(durvyasana).* The *r* in *Durga* denotes diseases *(rogaghna),* and the *ga* is the destroyer of sins *(papaghna),* injustice, irreligion, cruelty, laziness, and other evil habits. Thus the goddess Durga destroys all these evils represented by *du, r,* and *ga.*

The worship of Durga has been popular since very ancient times. Lord Ram worshiped Mother Durga to attain victory over the Demon King Ravana. The *Mahabharata* mentions the worship of Durga by Krishna for obtaining victory over the Kauravas.

Vaishnavas worship Durga as the Yoga Maya of Vishnu, and Shaivas worship her as the wife of Shiva. For the Vaishnavas and Shaktas she is another form of Uma or Parvati. Shaktas believe that she is the Mahamaya, the root cause of the world of names and forms. In *Durga Saptshati,* the most beloved scripture of Durga worshipers, she is mentioned by 108 names, and thus she is all forms of the Divine Mother, or the Divine Mother herself.

The *Markandeye Purana* tells this story about the manifestation of Durga: From the mouth of angry Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma, a large body of light was produced. At the same time, light issued from the body of other angry gods and subgods. In the end, all the radiance that came from the gods and subgods was united and became one body of light. Its radiance spread in all directions, and all the gods and subgods beheld a blazing ball of fire and radiance flaming with invincible vigor and power. This fire slowly converted itself into the form of a goddess. Her face was formed from the radiance, which came from the mouth of Lord Shiva. From the radiance of Ram came her long dark hair, and from Vishnu’s radiance her two arms were formed. From the radiance of the moon came her two breasts, and from the radiance of Indra the middle region of her body was formed. Her thighs were produced by the radiance of Varuna (Lord of Water), and her buttocks from the *tejas* of Prithvi (Earth). From the radiance of Brahma her feet were created, and her toes from the radiance of the sun. From the radiance of the Vasus (the guardians of the eight directions) her fingers were created, and from the radiance of Kubera, her nose. The three eyes of the goddess were produced from the radiance of three-headed Agni (God of Fire). Her ears were created from

the radiance of Marut (Lord of Wind), and the rest of her came from the radiance of Vishwakarma and other subgods.

All the gods provided Durga with powerful weapons. Shiva produced a trident out of his own trident and gave it to the goddess. Vishnu produced a disk from his *chakra* (disk) and presented it to her. Varuna gave her his conch. Pavan (Marut) gave her the bow and arrow, and Indra produced a *vajra* (thunderbolt) from his own vajra. Yama, Lord of Death, gave her a *danda* (scepter) and Brahma his *kamandalu* (water pot). The sun god gave radiance to each and every pore of her body, and she received a sword and a shield from Kala (Lord of Time). Vishwakarma presented her with an ax and unbreakable armor. Thus did Durga become accomplished with all manner of weapons and decorations.

This story from *Markandeye Purana* shows that Durga is the unified symbol of all divine forces. She is produced from the radiance of all the gods and therefore has their essence in her. This unified force only manifests when the evil forces threaten the very existence of the divine forces. Thus Durga represents a joint venture of the Divine Forces to destroy disharmony and establish harmony. Her birth is to establish the rule of Dharma (righteousness).

DURGA

Durga is accepted as the Primordial Prakriti and Shakti in the *Skanda Purana.* In *Bhavopanishad* she is praised as a *brahmarupini* (one who is like Brahma). The *Kurma Purana* accepts her as Nirguna Brahma (the Absolute God).

Her first appearance was in the very beginning, before the creation had really begun. It is said that Vishnu was sleeping, and the creator, Brahma, was created from his navel during this yoga-sleep. Brahma was not conscious about the purpose of his birth, so he was meditating on Lord Vishnu as he slept. At that time, from the dirt of the ear of Lord Vishnu, two

powerful asuras—Madhu and Kaitabha—were born, and they ran toward Brahma to kill him. Brahma was not powerful enough to destroy the demons, so he prayed to the Shakti Mahamaya, the power of Supreme Consciousness (Brahman). On invocation, the Divine Mother appeared before Brahma and woke Lord Vishnu to expose the mischievous intentions of Madhu and Kaitabha. Vishnu fought with those asuras for 5,000 divine years, but he could not destroy them. Then the Divine Mother enchanted them and made them say, “Vishnu, we have had enough fighting with you. Ask us for a boon.” Being bound by their own words, they had to grant Vishnu the desired boon—whereupon Lord Vishnu took out his disk and cut their heads off.

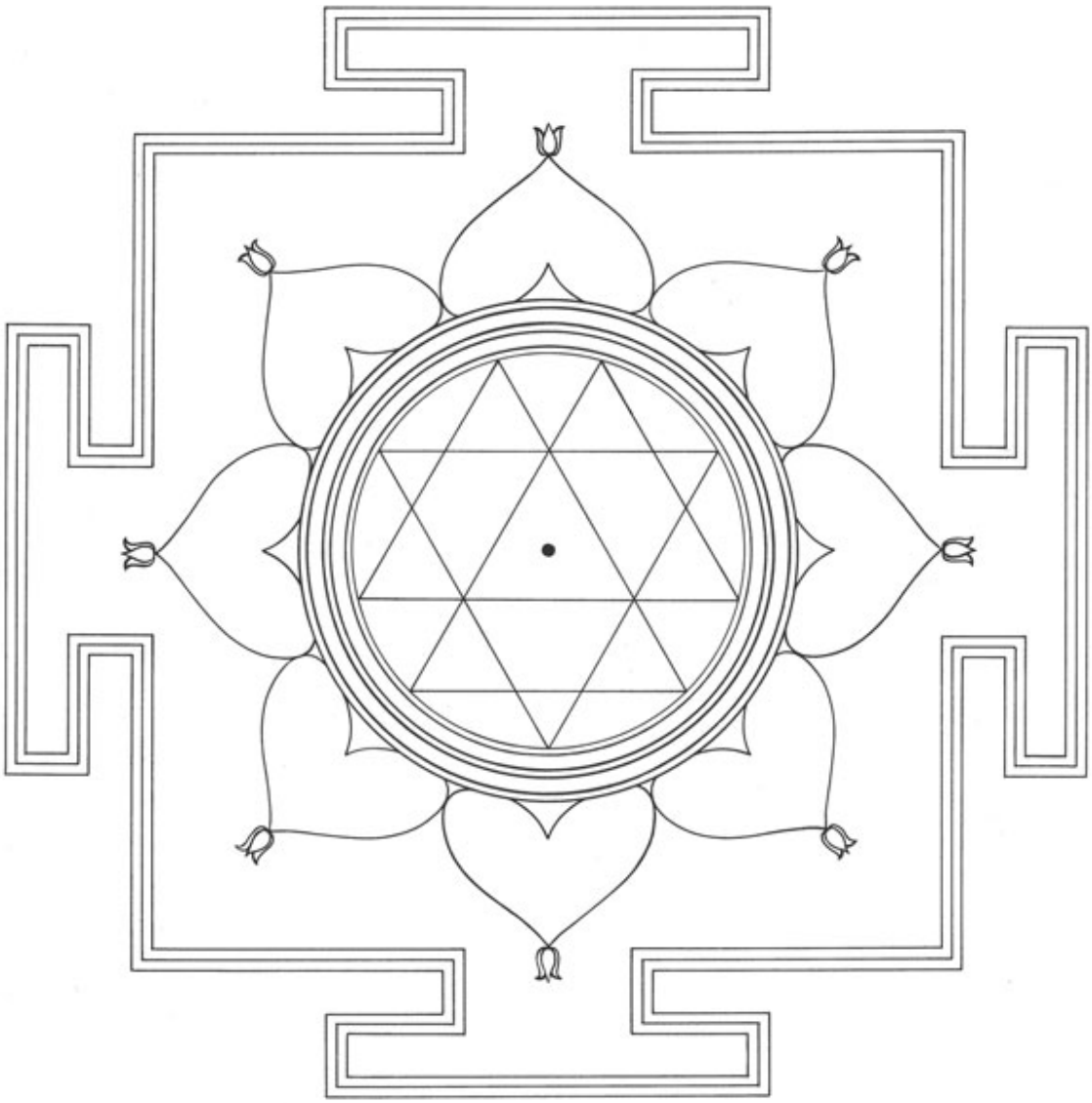
There is another story, in *Durga Saptshati,* which goes like this: Once upon a time there was a king, Suratha, who was living in the forest in a helpless condition because his kingdom had been taken away from him by his enemies. While in the forest, he became obsessed with thinking about his kingdom, his treasures, his palace. One day King Suratha met a merchant named Samadhi. This merchant had been cheated and robbed by his own wife and progeny, who turned him out of the house. The merchant, too, was always worried about his lost wealth, and so the king felt sympathy for him, and they became friends. Together they constructed an ashram in the forest and started living there. On one occasion they happened to have a great saint, known as Medha Rishi, as their guest, and he told them the story of the Divine Mother and how worshiping her in the correct way could bring an end to their miseries.

Then there is the story of a powerful demon called Mahish or Mahishasura, who obtained the boon that he would never be killed by anyone but a beautiful woman. After obtaining the boon, he became invincible and defeated Indra (Lord of Heaven) and dethroned him. He won all the three worlds and turned all the gods out of their abode in heaven. All the gods and subgods, accompanied by Brahma and Vishnu, went to Lord Shiva and told him about the cruelty and brutality of

Mahish. Shiva became angry upon hearing of these misdeeds, but he knew he was helpless like all other gods because of the boon. Only the Divine Mother could bring an end to this terrible drama. In his anger Shiva produced a beam of light from his mouth, and there also came a ray of light from all the gods. The rays of light united and manifested in the form of a beautiful woman, a goddess. The goddess made a sound that made the three worlds tremble, and Mahishasura, hearing it, sent his commanders to destroy the newborn power. Chikshur, Chamar, Udagra, Mahahanu, Asiloma, Vashkal, and Vidalaksh—all the great commanders of Mahishasura—came one by one with their army to fight, but all were killed by the Divine Mother Durga. After the death of all his powerful generals, Mahishasura himself came in the battlefield and started to fight—sometimes as a buffalo, sometimes as a lion, sometimes as an elephant. Sometimes he fought from the earth, and sometimes he went up into space and fought from there. Then the Divine Mother stepped down from her lion, jumped on Mahishasura, and chopped off his head. His death created a wave of joy among the gods, and they all worshiped Durga.

We see, then, that there are many stories about Durga that are similar and also very different, but all of them remind us of one very important fact: whenever the Divine Mother has assumed a form, she has always manifested from the radiance of all the gods and subgods. She represents the unified Divine Force. This Divine Force appears in forms so as to establish balance and harmony, peace and prosperity. All stories about Durga and other incarnations of the Divine Mother refer to the constant struggle between divine and demonic forces, the eternal pair of opposites. Without this struggle, the existence of the world of names and forms is not possible. Demonic forces are self-destructive but very powerful, whereas Divine Forces are constructive but slow and efficient. The demonic forces are very powerful in the beginning because they are united, while the Divine Forces are scattered here and there. But when the demonic forces

create imbalance, then all the gods unite, becoming one Divine Force called Shakti, and manifest as a goddess or god to destroy evil and create balance. Demonic forces are based on egotism, selfishness, and torturing others, whereas Divine Forces are based on sacrifice, penance, selfless service, love, universal brotherhood, and seeing the Divine in each and every existing particle. All of these ancient tales of gods and goddesses emphasize the victory of good over evil in the struggle that takes place within the human being. The love of luxury, material gain, and physical comforts is a demonic force inside us and appears as anger, hatred, greed, pride, jealousy, delusion, conceit, envy, and attachments. Wherever self-interest is involved, these forces appear. In contrast, devotion, mercy, love, and thoughts about the *sum-mum bonum* of human incarnation are Divine Forces inside us and appear as discipline, nonviolence, faith, confidence, total absorption, and detachment from all achievements.



DURGA YANTRA

Durga symbolizes the nondualistic existence of energized consciousness or conscious energy. Being the Divine Mother, she destroys the disharmony that is creating imbalance in the phenomenal world. She is the well-wisher of all—even toward those whom she destroys, because she is also *their* mother. After she killed Mahishasura, the gods asked her: “Mother, you could have burnt Mahisha and his commanders with your divine radiance. Why did you enact this drama of war with them?” The Divine Mother replied: “If I had burnt them like that, they would have gone to hell, and it would have been

difficult for them to improve or evolve. But by fighting with me and getting killed by me, they attain heaven, where they will change into good beings." Thus, Durga wants not simply to destroy evil but to transform it into good energy.

Durga is most often shown with eight hands, although sometimes she is shown with ten, and in the Mahadurga form she has twenty hands. She is equally worshiped by gods and demons and human of all castes and creeds.

Durga Yantra

Meditation on the saffron color of Durga's yantra produces a calming blue color, which fills the aspirant with serenity and purity. The nine-pointed star is spectacular and attractive, as in the Sri Yantra, and it is visually the most powerful yantra after the Sri Yantra.

The *bhupur* is of the color of sunlight because Durga is the divine radiance unified in a female form. Meditation on this color produces the complementary color, blue, which brings peace and fills the meditator with magnetic energy.

The eight-petaled lotus of the yantra represents the octave of existence: (1) love, (2) mercy, (3) sacrifice, (4) penance, (5) selfless service, (6) devotion, (7) faith, and (8) detachment from all achievements. These help the Divine in us to evolve and to get away from the *du,* which is dukh (sufferings), daridra (poverty), and durvyasana (bad habits, addictions); *r,* which is rogaghna (diseases), and *ga,* which is papaghna (injustice, irreligion, cruelty, and laziness).

The three golden rings represent the three phases of time—past, present, and future.

The nine-pointed star in the center, which is created by four triangles superimposed over one another, represents the nine shaktis (Nav Durga). Three of the triangles are upward-pointing and represent the three primal forces: creation (Brahma), preservation (Vishnu), and destruction (Shiva). They are so well constructed that they overlap one another, just as creation, preservation, and destruction overlap one

another. These three triangles represent the effulgence or light that came from the mouths of the three gods of the Hindu trinity. The fourth, downward-pointing yellow triangle represents the manifestation of the body of light as unified Divine Force. The overlapping of these four triangles produces another triangle in the middle. It points upward and represents the Divine Mother, whose each side is coming from the three Divine Forces.

The center of the yantra and the central triangle is the bindu, which represents the Divine Mother herself.

SHRI YANTRA

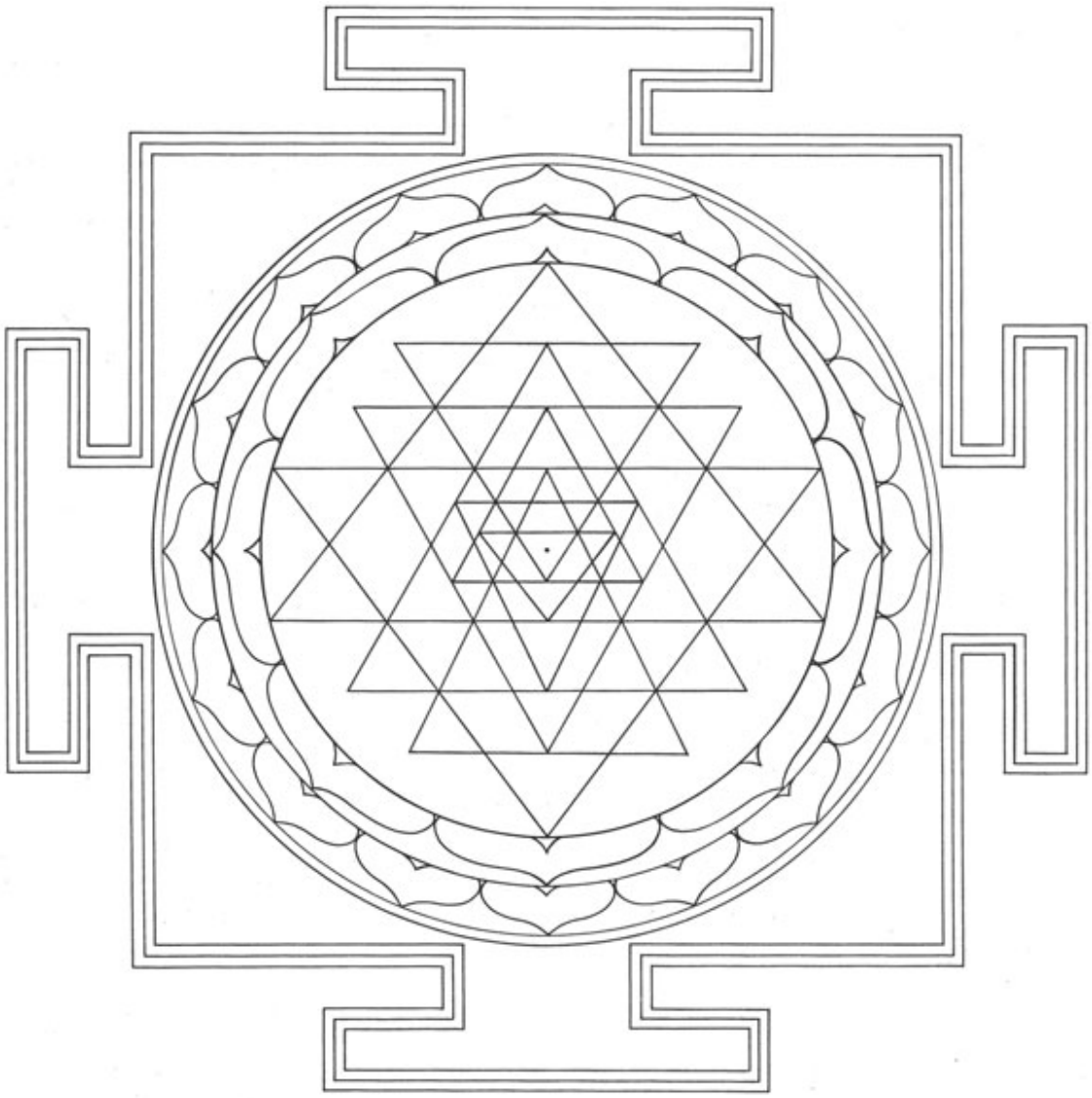
The worship of Shri Vidya has been popular in India from very ancient times. Swami Gaurpad, the teacher of Adi Shankaracharya (the first Shankaracharya), was a worshiper of Shri Vidya. He initiated Shankara into the worship of Shri Vidya, and Shankara wrote a very enlightening book on this subject, called *Saundariya Lahiri;* its English translation is now available under the same title. Many contemporaries of Shankara—Sureshwar, Padmapad, Vidyaranya Swami—were worshipers of Shri Vidya. The brother of Chaitanya, who was known as Nityanand, was also a worshiper of Shri Vidya, though he was a Vaishnava. Abhinavgupta, a famous Shaivite master, worshiped Shri Vidya along with his Shiva worship. Thus, the worship of Shri Vidya has been popular among Shaktas, Vedantacharyas, Vaishnavas, and Shaivas.

The third Mahavidya out of the ten, known as Shodashi, is Shri Vidya. She is known by various names—Sundari, Lalita, Tripurasundari, Shodashi, and Bala. To worship Shri Vidya one has to understand her yantra, which is the most fascinating of all and is known as Shri Yantra, Shri Chakra, or Lalita Chakra. The worship of Shri Yantra, the method of constructing it, and its complete explanation are given in *Saundariya Lahiri.* It is according to the most ancient path, known as Samaya Mat, as Shankara was a Vedantacharya and was initiated in Samaya

Mat. This cult is different from the Kaul Mat, which is purely a Shakti-worshiping cult. The difference between the two schools lies in the placement of the yantra. Worshipers of Samaya Mat place Shri Yantra in such a way that there are five upward-pointing and four downward-pointing triangles in it. This placement is reversed in Kaul Mat, where the number of downward-pointing triangles is five and of upward-pointing triangles four. Two different names are given to these yantras. The one with five upward-pointing and four downward-pointing triangles is the yantra of Shrishthi Kram (order of evolution). The one with four upward-pointing and five downward-pointing triangles is the yantra of Samhar Kram (order of dissolution). The visible difference between the two yantras, which can be easily seen, is in the central triangle, which contains the bindu. In Samaya Mat, this central triangle is upward-pointing, and in Kaul Mat it is downward-pointing. In Kaul Mat the construction of this yantra is a secret, taught only to initiates. In the scripture *Lalita Sahasranam,* one can also find the method of constructing a Shri Yantra.

As a diagram, Shri Yantra is very eye-catching and powerful. It is constructed with an intersection of nine triangles. Four of these triangles are pointing upward and five downward. The four upward-pointing triangles are Shiva triangles, and the five downward-pointing triangles are Shakti triangles. A combination of these nine triangles makes Shri Yantra the most dynamic of all yantras. If we construct a similar figure by intersecting eight triangles—four pointing upward and four pointing downward—it becomes balanced and static. The imbalance created by the addition of one more triangle makes the yantra dynamic and more powerful. Shri Yantra is the only asymmetrical diagram, and the beauty of it is that when you look at it, it appears symmetrical. For the purpose of worship, a Shri Yantra is engraved on copper, silver, and gold plates as a flat line drawing, or sculpted from stone and precious gems (quartz, crystals, etc.). This form of Shri Yantra looks like a pyramid, and there are many such yantras available from ancient times.

SHRI



SHRI YANTRA

Shri Yantra usually represents the body of the goddess Tripurasundari, although some scriptures refer to it as the navel of the Divine Mother. In fact, sculpted forms of the Divine Mother are available in which the Shri Yantra is inscribed in the navel.

Shri Yantra is also known as the yantra of cosmos. In the *Bhairavayamal Tantra* it is clearly said that the yantra of Tripurasundari is of the shape of the cosmos. *InKamkalavilas* it is said that Shri Yantra is constructed on the same principles on which the human organism is constructed. Just as the body

has nine chakras (psychic centers), so a Shri Yantra has nine chakras (groups), as follows:

1. Bindu
2. Trikon—the central triangle, which contains the bindu
3. Ashtar—a group of eight triangles outside the trikon
4. Antar Dashar—a group of ten inner triangles
5. Bahir Dashar—a group of ten outer triangles
6. Chatur Dashar—a group of fourteen triangles
7. Ashta Dal—a ring of eight lotus petals
8. Shodash Dal—a ring of sixteen lotus petals
9. Bhupur—the square form with four gates

The word *chakra* in Shri Yantra means a group, not the psychic centers of Kundalini Yoga, but there is a definite relationship between the nine figures of Shri Yantra and the nine psychic centers, as shown in Table 10.

The *Kamakalavilas Agama* states that it is very necessary to understand the true form of the goddess Tripur Sundari, and the only way to understand it is to understand the Shri Yantra, which is her symbolic form. Thus it becomes clear that Shri Yantra is:

- the cosmic form (the diagram of evolution and development of the cosmos)
- the form of the human organism (the diagram of inner circuits of the body)
- the form of the goddess Tripur Sundari (because the goddess is energy, which pervades the entire phenomenal world)

The five downward-pointing triangles, or shakti triangles, are manifested as five tanmatras (sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell), five mahabhutas (akasha, air, fire, water, and earth), five sense organs (ear, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose), and five organs of action (hands, feet, mouth, genitals, and anus). In the human body these five elements are skin, nerves, flesh, fat, and bones. The four upward-pointing

triangles, which are Shiva triangles, represent the male energy and exist as chitta (being), buddhi (intellect), ahamkar (self-consciousness, or the feeling of “I,” also known as ego), and manas (mind). As the five downward-pointing and four upward-pointing triangles are intersecting and overlapping one another, producing forty-three visible triangles, similarly the male and female forces intersect in the cosmos, producing various objects of the phenomenal world. As the bindu in the center represents the Divine Mother, so there is bindu in the Sahasrar Chakra representing the individual consciousness, which is the self *(Jiva)* soul, spirit, or *atman.*

Bindu

Bindu, the point inside the central triangle and the center of the yantra, is also known as Sarva Anandmayi Chakra, which means a chakra of total bliss. Bindu is the seed of the entire universe, and it is beyond time and space. In this bindu, Kameshwar (Lord of Kama, or Desire) and Kameshwari (the Shakti of the desire for final union) remain ever united. Kameshwar and Kameshwari are in human organism above the Som Chakra, in Sahasrar Chakra (the chakra of the thousand-petaled lotus). During meditation on the Shri Yantra, worship of Shiva and Shakti in eternal union is done by concentrating on the bindu. Worship of Ishtha Devata (personal deity) and Guru is also done by focusing on bindu. Bindu is the last point in the yantra, but because it is the center of the yantra, it is the beginning. Without knowing this point, the construction of a yantra is impossible. This makes the bindu the prime cause, the seed, of the yantra. The act of worship of Shri Yantra finishes with meditation of the bindu.

TABLE 10

Place in the Body (psychic center)	Name of Chakra	Number of Petals	Name of Figure in Shri Yantra
1. BHRU-MADHYA Between eyebrows	AJNA	2	Bindu
2. LAMBIKA Between nose and throat	INDRA YONI	8	Trikon
3. KANTH Throat	VISHUDDHA	16	Group of 8 triangles (ASHTAR)
4. HRIDAYA Heart	ANAHATA	12	Group of 10 triangles inside (ANTARDASHAR)
5. NABHI Navel	MANIPURA	10	Group of 10 triangles outside (BAHIRDASHAR)
6. VASTI Below navel	SVADHISTHANA	6	Group of 14 triangles (CHATURDASHAR)
7. MULADHAR Pelvic region	MULADHARA	4	Ring of eight lotus petals (ASHTA DAL)
8. TADDHODESH Below pelvic region	KUL	6	Ring of sixteen lotus petals (SHODASH DAL)
9. TADDHODESH Lowest part	AKUL	1,000	BHUPUR

Trikon

Also known as Sarva Siddhi Prad Chakra, the trikon is the main triangle, in which the bindu is located. Kaulas worship it as a downward-pointing triangle. According to Tantra the bindu itself becomes the triangle when it wants to manifest itself. Trikon is created by the radiance of bindu. It is the seed of the tree of creation and remains inside it in its subtle form. Whenever the period of rest is over and the period of motion starts, the bindu creates the trikon. Whatever is hidden comes out.

The three sides of the Trikon are created by three goddesses —Kameshwari, Brijeshwari, and Agamalini—who are accompanied by the three gunas (sattva, rajas, and tamas). The three important lines of the trikon are *pithas* (abodes) and are present in human organism also:

1. Kamakshya Pith, present in the Muladhara Chakra
2. Purnagiri Pith, present in the Anahata Chakra
3. Jalandhar Pith, present in the Vishuddha Chakra

The trikon is also seen as a yoni (female genital organ), the primordial Prakriti with three gunas, three states of consciousness: *jagriti* (waking state), *swapna* (dream state), and *sushupti* (deep sleep). The primordial Prakriti rests as bindu in the period of rest and becomes active in the period of motion as trikon. She is the one who is known as the Divine Mother Tripur Sundari, Tripura, or Shri in Tantra. As expressed in *Kamakalavilas,* there is no difference between the bindu (Shiva) and trikon (Shakti). Kameshwar and Kameshwari become the three aspects of consciousness—cognition, action, and affection, also known as knowing, doing, and feeling. The name Sarva Siddhi Prad means “giver of all powers” (siddhis). Meditation on this chakra gives power.

Ashtar

Ashtar, the group of eight triangles, is also known as Sarva Rog Har Chakra—a chakra that destroys all disease. The eight triangles are in fact eight yonis, which create the octave of existence. Kameshwar is seen by Tantrics with four arms holding four different implements, and Kameshwari is also seen with four arms. Thus the eight implements held by Kameshwar and Kameshwari become the eight triangles. These eight triangles represent eight goddesses: (1) Vashini, (2) Kameshwari, (3) Modini, (4) Vimala, (5) Aruna, (6) Jayaini, (7) Sarveshwari, and (8) Kaulini. This chakra is also known as Agnikhand, dwelling place of fire, and the ten energies of fire

are present in it: (1) Ushma, (2) Jwalini, (3) Visphulingini, (4) Sushri, (5) Surupa, (6) Kapila, (7) Havyavaha, (8) Kavyavaha, (9) Prasphutika, (10) Sheet. The Ashtar is supposed to be the real Shri Yantra. The eight triangles of Ashtar and one trikon—these nine—are called the Navdwar Chakra, which is the foundation stone of the phenomenal world. In Tantric scriptures the human body is also called Navdwar Chakra because it has nine gates. The worship of the ashtar, trikon, and bindu gives protection, power, and bliss and takes away all kinds of spiritual, mental, and physical ailments.

Antardashar

Antardashar, the group often triangles that surround the ashtar, is also known as the Sarv Rakshakar Chakra—a chakra that provides all kinds of protection. Protection is achieved not from outer but from inner disciplines. In this chakra lies the power to protect because this chakra is the control room of all the five organs of action and five organs of sense. By controlling the ten indriyas, one gains protection from all external stimuli. In the ten triangles are seated ten Yonis (Shaktis): (1) Sarvagya, (2) Sarva Shakti-Prada, (3) Sarva Aishwari-Prada, (4) Sarva Gyanmayi, (5) Sarva Vyadhi Nashini, (6) Sarvadhara, (7) Sarva Pap Hara, (8) Sarva Anandmayi, (9) Sarva Raksha, and (10) Sarva Aipsat Phal Prada. These ten work as ten body fires and perform the functions of (1) *rechak* (purgation), (2*)pachak* (digestion), (3) *shoshak* (drying, absorbing), (4) *dahak* (burning), (5) *plavak* (taking out the essence; secreting enzymes), (6) *ksharak* (acidifying), (7) *uddharak* (taking out), (8) *kshobhak* (creating pessimism), *(9)jrambhak* (assimilating), (10) *mohak* (creating luster, which makes one attractive). If one can regulate these ten fires, then by controlling the ten indriyas one can get complete protection.

Bahirdashar

Bahirdashar, the group of ten outer triangles that surround the antardashar, is also known as Sarva Arth Sadhak Chakra—a chakra that makes all kinds of realizations possible. *Arth* in Sanskrit means money as well as meanings. This chakra gives one the power to realize what one wants, whatever gives meaning to one's life. In the ten triangles are ten Yonis or Shaktis: (1) Sarva Sampada Prada, (2) Sarva Priyankari, (3) Sarva Mangal Karini, (4) Sarva Kam Prada, (5) Sarva Dukha Swavimochini, (6) Sarva Mrityu Prashamni, (7) Sarva Vighna Nivarni, (8) Sarvang Sundari, (9) Sarva Saubhagyadayini, and (10) Sarva Siddhi Prada. These Shaktis regulate the ten pranas in the human organism: (1)*prana,* (2) *apana,* (3) *samana,* (4) *vyana,* (5) *udana,* (6) *kurm,* (7) *krikil,* (8) *nag,* (9) *dhananjaya,* and (10) *dev-dutta.* It is through prana that everything becomes alive and meaningful, or full of arth. Meditation on this chakra helps one get control over prana, and control over prana gives control over mind. Mind works through the ten indriyas (five organs of action and five organs of sense). The sense organs make the outside world meaningful, and the organs of action provide the ability to obtain the objects of desire and satisfy the senses—but without prana, neither group of organs can work.

Chaturdashar

Chaturdashar, the group of fourteen outermost triangles or Yonis, is also known as Sarva Saubhagya Dayak Chakra. Fourteen Shaktis residing in the Yonis are: (1) Sarva Sankshobini, (2) Sarva Vid Drawani, (3) Sarva Akarshini, (4) Sarva Ahladini, (5) Sarva Sammohini, (6) Sarva Istambhini, (7) Sarva Jambhini, (8) Sarva Shankari, (9) Sarva Ranjini, (10) Sarvonmadini, (11) Sarva Arth Sadhini, (12) Sarva Sampatti Purni, (13) Sarva Mantramayi, and (14) Sarva Dwand-kshyakari. These goddesses control the fourteen nadis: (1) *alambusha,* (2) *kuhu,* (3) *vishvodari,* (4) *varuni,* (5) *hastjihva,* (6) *yashodari,* (7)*payasvani,* (8) *gandhari, (9)pusha,* (10) *shankhini,* (11) *saraswati,* (12) *ida,* (13) *pingala,* (14)

sushumna. (For more details, see the *Yogshik Upanishad.)* These fourteen Shaktis reside in (1) manas (mind), (2) buddhi (intellect), (3) chitta (being), and (4) ahamkara (self-consciousness or ego) and the ten indriyas. This way these goddesses constitute the outside form of the yantra—and the body (microcosm)—and bring all kinds of good luck, which is evident by the name Sarva Saubhagya Dayak Chakra—a chakra that gives all good fortune.

Ashtadal

Ashtadal, the ring of eight lotus petals, is also known as Sarva Sankshoban Chakra. These petals are the seat of eight goddesses: (1) Anang Kusma, (2) Anang Mekhla, (3) Anang Madna, (4) Anang Madanatura, (5) Anang Rekha, (6) Anang Vegini, (7) Anang Madanankusha, and (8) Anang Malini. Their functions are (1) *vachan* (speech), *(2)adan* (transference), (3) *gaman* (departure), (4) *visarg* (transcendence), (5) *anand* (bliss), (6) *ban* (absence), (7) *upadan* (giving), and (8) *upeksha* (neglecting). The eight petals symbolize (1) *rupa* (form), (2) *rasa* (taste), *(3)gandh* (smell), (4) *sparsb* (touch), (5) *shabda* (sound), (6) *nada* (primordial sound), (7) *prakriti* (primordial nature), and *(8)purusha* (the self).

Shodashdal

Shodashdal, the ring of sixteen lotus petals, is also known as Sarva Ashapurak Chakra, the chakra of fulfilling all hopes, of materializing all kinds of expectations. It is the wish-fulfilling chakra. The sixteen petals are the seat of sixteen shaktis: (1) Kamakarshini, (2) Buddhiyakarshini, (3) Ahamkarakarshini, (4) Shabdakarshini, (5) Sparshakarshini, (6) Rupakarshini, (7) Rasakarshini, (8) Gandhakarshini, (9) Chittakarshini, (10) Dhairyakarshini, (11) Ismrityakarshini, (12) Namakarshini, (13) Bijakarshini, (14) Atmakarshini, (15) Amritakarshini, (16) Sharirakarshini. These shaktis work through five elements, ten indriyas, and one Mind—sixteen tools. The two rings of lotus

petals are related to lunar energy, whereas the groups of forty-three triangles are related to solar energy, and this makes the yantra dynamic—the combination of lunar and solar energy, the electromagnetic energy.

Bbupur

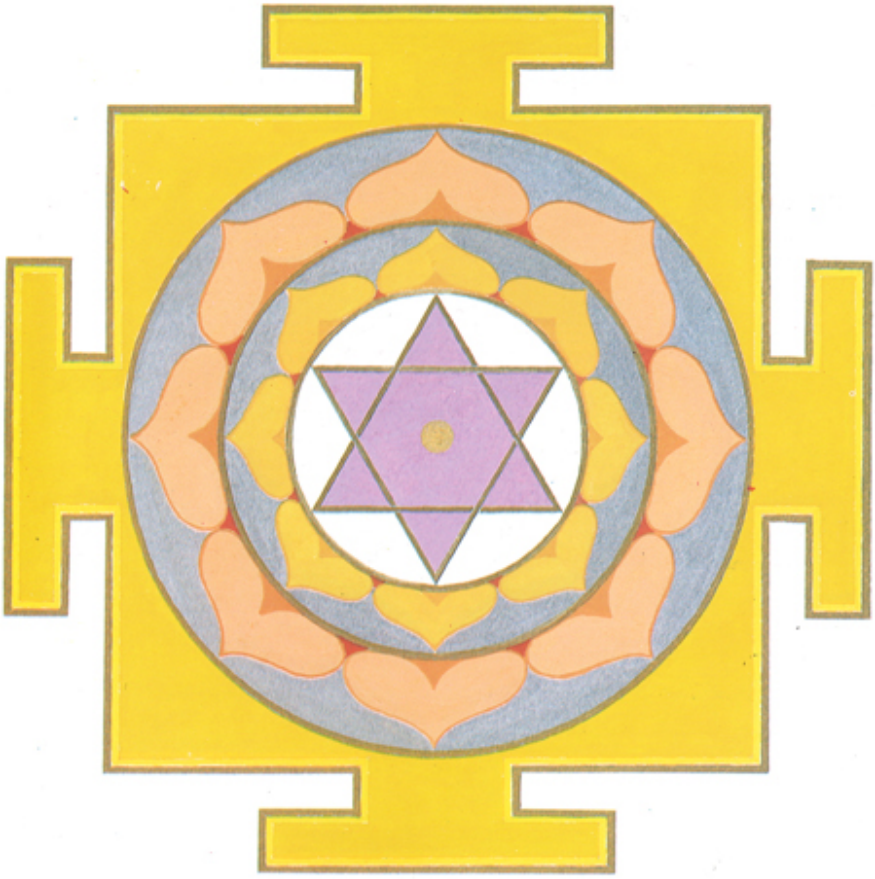
Bhupur, the square with four gates, is also known as Traiyelok Mohan Chakra, the chakra that attracts the three *lokas* (planes): physical *(bhuloka),* astral *(bhuvarloka),* and celestial *(swargloka).* Usually bhupur is the seat of the yantra—the dwelling place of the shakti, representing the gross material phenomenon, in which she dwells as long as the cycle of creation and preservation lasts. All guardians of the eight directions *(dikpalas) are* present in this bhupur. Ten siddhis (also famous as eight siddhis) are present in this bhupur: (1) *anima* (atomicity), (2) *laghima* (lightness), (3) *mahima* (might), (4) *ishatava* (power over others), (5) *vashitva* (attraction of others), (6) *prakamya* (ability to assume a desired form), (7) *bhukti* (enjoyment of power), (8) *iccha* (will to realize desires), (9) *prapti* (attainment), and (10) *mukti* (power to fulfill all desires). Also present are the eight mothers: (1) Brahmi, (2) Maheshwari, (3) Kaumari, (4) Vaishnavi, (5) Varahi, (6) Aindri, (7) Chamunda, (8) Mahalakshmi. This chakra is a meeting place of the three currents—Ganga (lunar), Yamuna (solar), and Saraswati (neutral)—and so is called the Tirtharaj (king of all places of pilgrimage); this symbolically means the meeting place of the gross and subtle energies.

In Kaul Mat the three rings around the sixteen-petaled lotus are not included, whereas in Samaya Mat these rings are drawn and are supposed to represent the three Divine Mothers, known as three different kinds of expression: Pashyanti, Madhyama, and Vaikhri. The three combined together are known as Para Vani. (Here the three rings are not included since I am presenting the yantras as drawn in Kaul Mat.) In Kaul Mat also there is a separate yantra for Shodashi

or Tripur Sundari (included among the ten Mahavidya Yantras, with Shri Yantra given as an additional yantra).

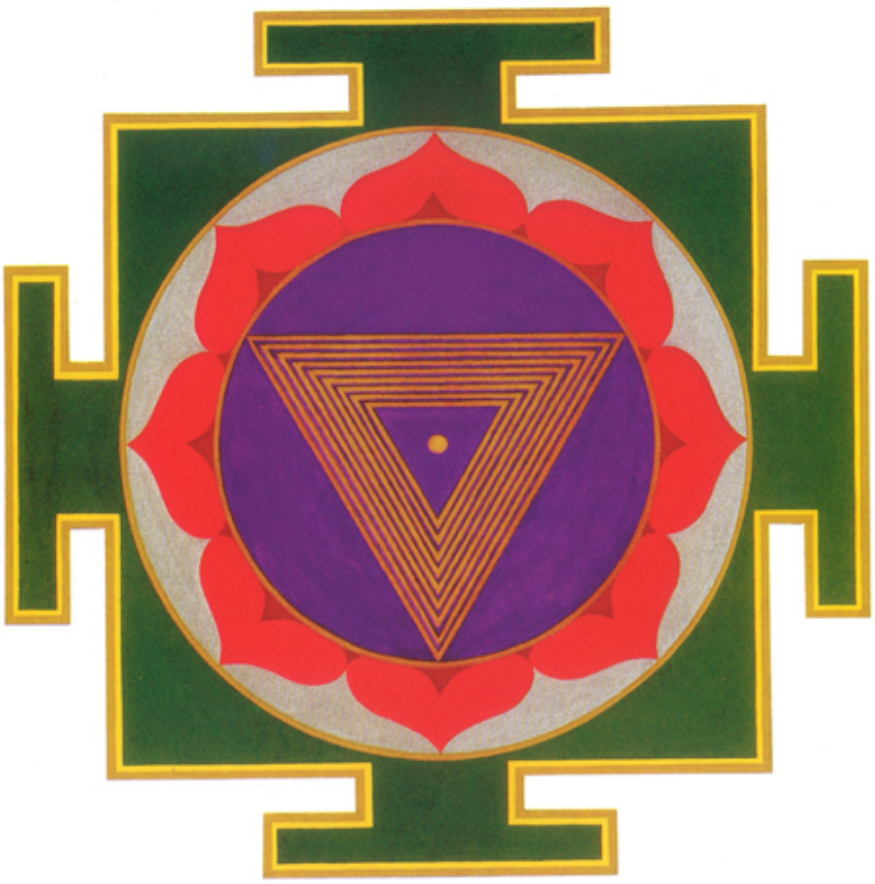
Shri Yantra is very complicated when seen as a line drawing, but when it is colored, all the chakras described above become clear and it is a feast for the eyes.

The yantra is worshiped to achieve all sorts of desired objects. The five downward-pointing triangles are the seat of five Shaktis: (1) Parma, (2) Raudri, (3) Jayeshtha, (4) Ambika, and (5) Parashakti. The four upward-pointing triangles are symbolic of the male principle, Shiva, and of (1) *ichcha,* (2) *kriya,* (3) *gyan,* and (4) *sbanti.* The triangles symbolize the Yonis. The bindu, the eight-petaled lotus, the sixteen-petaled lotus, and the bhupur are symbolic of Shiva. Thus the yantra is a combination of Shiva and Shakti elements, which together are the cosmos. The two rings of lotus petals are believed to be the Som Mandala, a mandala of the moon. Meditation on each of the nine chakras described above should be done, and the sounds of the Sanskrit language should be made in proper order. Then the worship of this yantra brings all kinds of powers and achievements. But all this should be done under the proper guidance of a teacher, a Guru who is initiated in Shri Vidya, and it is important to remember that meditation on Shri Yantra should *not be* done at night since the eyes require daylight to work with the complicated pattern.



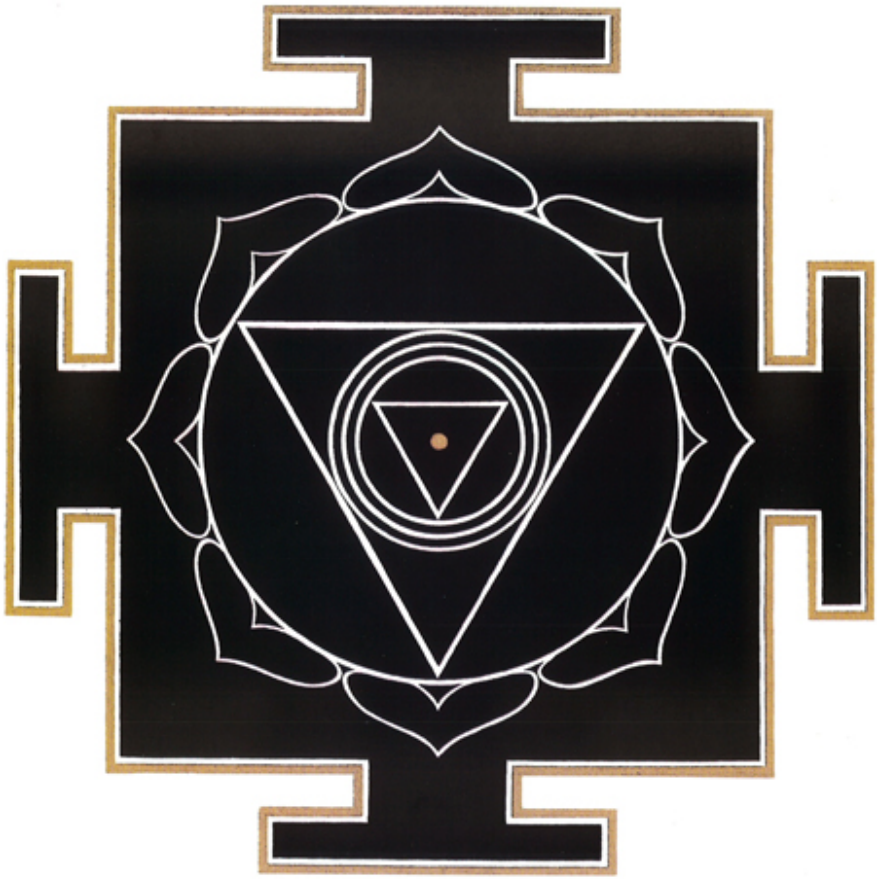
BHUVANESHARI

भुवनेश्वरी यन्त्र



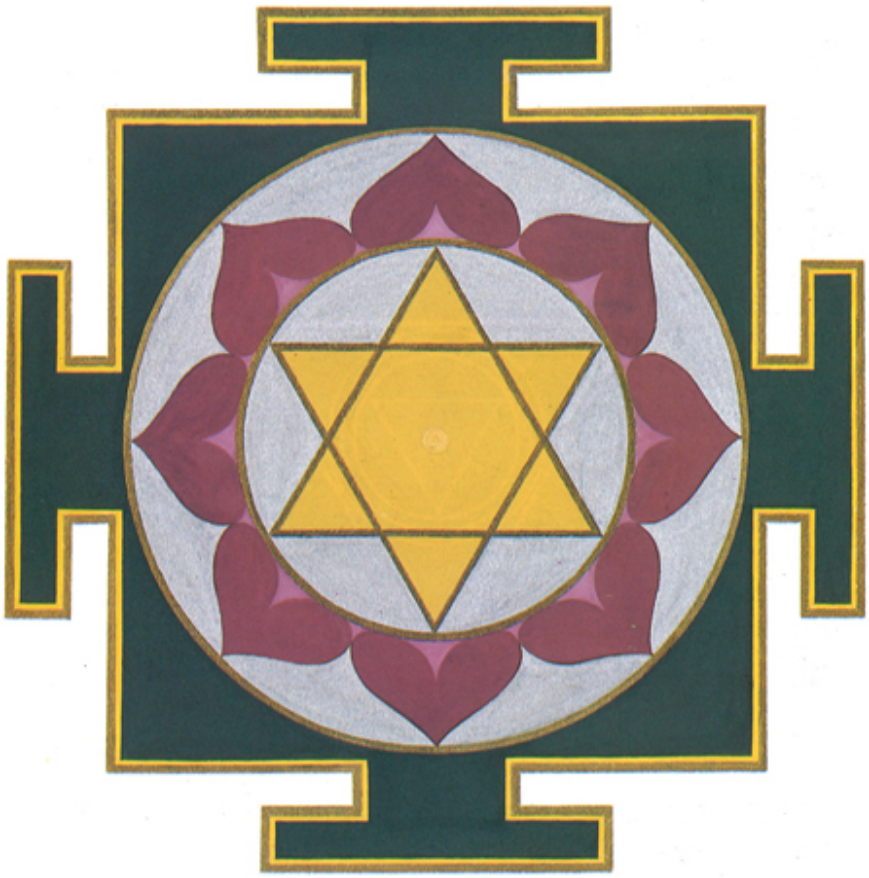
TRIPUR BHAIRAVI

त्रिपुरभैरवी यन्त्र



CHINNAMASTA

छिन्नमस्ता यन्त्र



DHUMAVATI

धूमावती यन्त्र

CHAPTER FIVE

YANTRAS OF THE TEN MAHAVIDYAS

KALI TARA MAHAVIDYA SHODASHI
BHUVANESHWARI
BHAIRVI CHLNNAMASTA CHA VIDYA
DHUMAVATI TATHA
MATANGI SIDDHA VIDYA CHA KATHITA
BAGLAMUKHI
ETA DASHA MAHA VIDYA SARVA
TANTRESHU GOPITAH.

Kali, Tara, Shodashi, Bhuvaneshwari, Bhairavi, Chinnamasta and Dhumavati, Matangi, Kamala, and Bagla Mukhi, are ten Mahavidyas which are the secret of all Tantras.

KALI

There is a story in *Devi Bhagwat Purana* about the incarnation of Kali. Once upon a time two danavas (demonic forces), Shumbh and Nishumbh, undertook hard penances to please the creator, Brahma, and obtained from him the boon of being unconquerable by any man (male energy). After acquiring the power which came from the boon, they became invincible and started conquering the three worlds: the bhulo-ka (earth), bhuvarloka (astral plane), and swarg-loka (celestial plane, the dwelling place of the gods and subgods, ruled by Indra). They drove the gods and subgods out of the Swargloka (the heavens). Knowing that no male energy could conquer these demonic forces, the gods and subgods, including Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the

Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer, collected on the bank of the river Ganges (also known as Janhvi) and prayed to the Divine Mother with the mantra NAMO DEVAIYE.

Hearing their prayers, the Divine Mother was pleased and sent her shakti, the Mother Gauri, to help the gods. Mother Gauri appeared before the gods and heard their story about the power of Shumbh and Nishumbh. She then assumed the ferocious form of Kali and destroyed the evil forces of Shumbh and Nishumbh and their two generals, Chand and Mund.

Kali is thus Mother Gauri, the present wife of Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva in his destructive aspect is known as Mahakala, and the Divine Mother Gauri as Kali or Mahakali.

The Sanskrit word *kala* is “death” on one hand and “time” on the other. Everything in this phenomenal world is time-bound. When a being’s time is over, its shakti is gone and the being is dead. Death, in other words, is the end point in time of the life force (prana). Matter is neither created nor destroyed; it only changes form. Death is therefore a change or transformation. Kali is the goddess of this transformation, which is essential for the renewal of the energy (the life force) and spiritual growth.

Attachment to the material form (the physical body) causes fear of death. This is the basic fear rooted deep in our brain stem, the primitive brain, and is the basic obstacle in the path of the spiritual growth. Shumbh and Nishumbh are the demonic forces of attachment, threatening our spiritual helpers and forcing them out of their abode.

Invoking Kali by these spiritual forces can bring an end to this threat. Kali thus removes the fear of death, the basic insecurity of the first chakra. For the ignorant ones who are attached to their physical body and are eternally insecure, she is ferocious, but for the gods (the spiritual forces) she is Gauri, who has assumed the form of Kali to help them. In that ferocious form she conquers the demonic forces of false attachment—Shumbh and Nishumbh, Chand and Mund.

KALI

The sadhak of Tantra has to confront his or her Shumbh and Nishumbh, and through invoking Kali (kundalini) the sadhak can escape the clutches of the fear of death. The love of Kali removes this fear and opens the door of the knowledge (mahavidya) of eternity.

The physical body is dependent upon prana, flowing through the left and right nostrils, or the ida and pingala, so called because they excite the working of ida and pingala nadis when active. The ida and pingala nadis originate in

the Muladhara Chakra (first chakra) with sushumna and terminate in the left and right nostrils respectively. By pranayama, the prana is controlled and the passage of sushumna nadi is opened. In an individual, prana is breath, but it is the same prana or pranic force that pervades the cosmos as time, movement, or frequencies. By mastering prana the yogi becomes free from the bondage of time. Ida and pingala, the lunar and solar currents, keep the sadhak time-bound and create in him the fear of death. Sushumna is beyond time. It goes across the brain stem to the cerebral cortex, the seat of consciousness, where matter is transformed into consciousness. When the prana is made to flow through sushumna, the evil forces of lunar and solar currents (Shumbh and Nishumbh) are paralyzed and the kundalini is awakened from its deep sleep. She rises up through the brahmanadi, which is in the center of sushumna, and pierces the six chakras, dissolving the five basic elements into their source, the mahat. These basic elements are the material constituents of the physical body. Any attachment to these elements in any form (desire) creates a terrifying kundalini experience. When the material attachments are removed by purification *(bhuta-shuddhi)*, Kali (Kundalini, the primordial force) is pleased and the sadhak is able to have a pleasant kundalini experience, which leads him beyond tattvas (tattvatit state) and beyond gunas (gunatit state) to the realm of ananda (bliss) and transcends him to the region of eternity (beyond time-bound consciousness), where there is no fear of death.

Kali is therefore the mahavidya that removes the *avidya* (ignorance) that makes us fear death. She is the first mahavidya and also known as Adya (the first-born)—one of the names used for Kundalini Shakti.

Kali Yantra

This yantra form is based on the one given in *Shakta Pramod,* a very popular Shakta scripture.

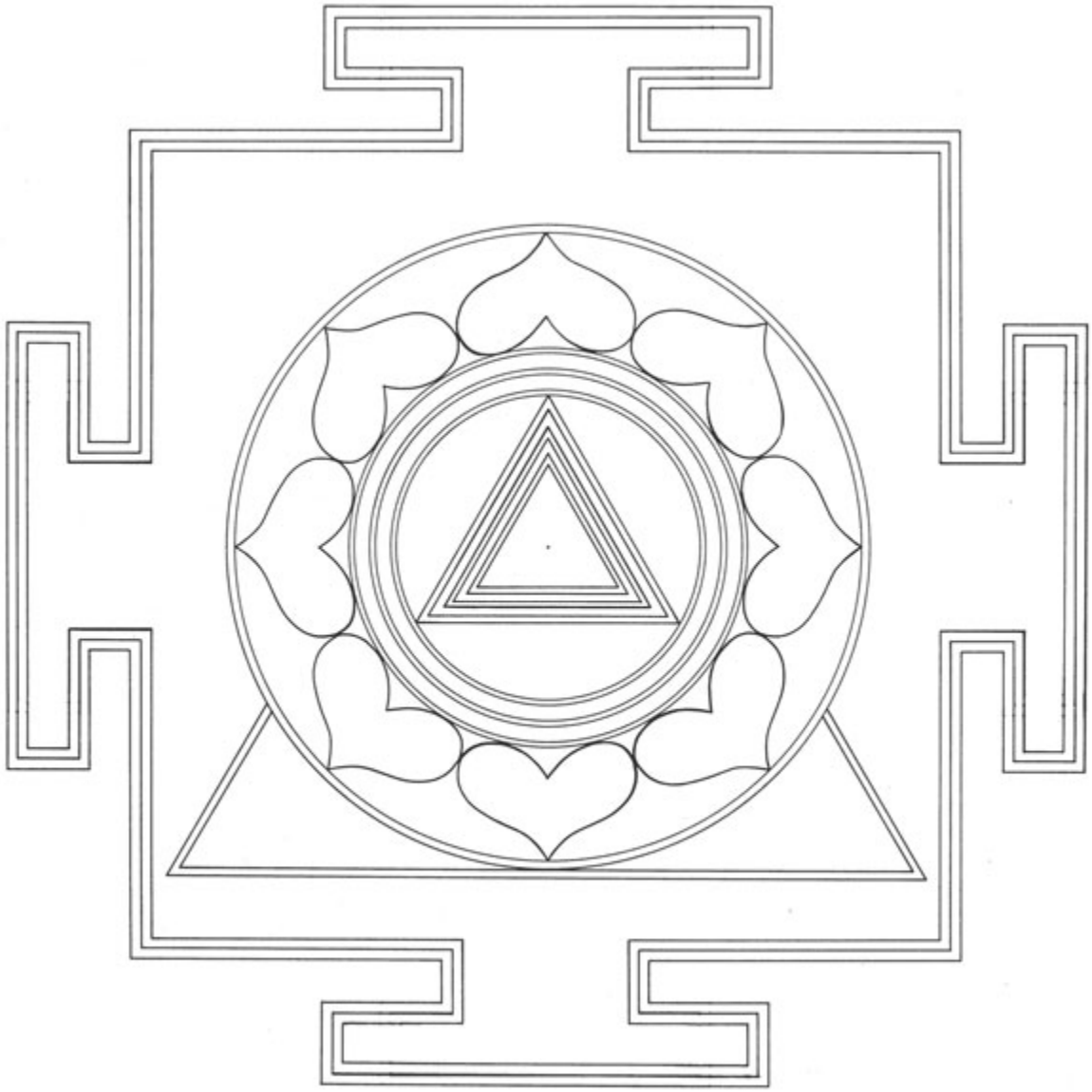
The outside square, known as bhupur, the seat of the yantra, is the same as for any other yantra, with four gates at the east, west, north, and south, corresponding to the four cardinal points.

The two lines around the bhupur and the gates—colored gold and chrome yellow—form the two layers, and the deep blue color of the bhupur forms the third. These three layers are the three states of matter: solid, liquid, and gaseous. Each layer inside and outside the bhupur (seat) is marked by a gold line, which helps to maintain the geometrical structure of the diagram.

Inside the bhupur and outside the circular pattern appears a triangle that is only partially visible—at its base line and two corners outside the circular pattern. This triangle represents the Cosmic Mother (Tripuramba), inside of whom is the entire phenomenal world, represented by an eight-petaled lotus. This partially visible triangle is symbolic of the infinity of the Divine Mother, who is only partially manifested as Kali.

The eight-petaled lotus represents the octave of prakriti, the manifested phenomenon: (1) akasha, (2) air, (3)fire, (4) water, (5) earth, (6) mind, (7) intellect, and (8) ego.

The three gold circles inside the eight-petaled lotus symbolize the three aspects of time to which these eight petals of the phenomenal existence contribute their karmas. These three golden rings of time are past, present, and future, which are connected with the same point, the center being concentric.



KALI YANTRA

The three triangles overlapping each other represent the three gunas—sattva, rajas, and tamas—which are the three qualities or modes of energy, the shakti. These three triangles are connected with the three rings of time.

In the center is the bindu, the central point of meditation —the Divine Mother Kali herself.

The color of this yantra is dominated by a dark or deep blue. Meditation on this color forms its complementary color, orange, which gives inspiration, makes one ready to

accept the ideas of others, makes one sociable, and cures depression and pessimism.

The crimson with a touch of blue, which is the color of the central triangle, inside of which is the golden bindu, is a color of love (faith).

TARA

The name Tara comes from the Sanskrit root *tr,* which means “to take across.” She who takes one across the ocean of the world of relative existence (samsara) is Tara. She is the shakti of Akshobh, one of the many names of Lord Shiva.

There is a famous legend that describes how both gods and demons joined hands to obtain the *amrit* (elixir of life) in the ocean. To churn the ocean they used Mount Sumeru, which is the spine of our earth plane (bhuloka), and they used the king of the snakes, Vasuki, as a rope. The head end of the great snake Vasuki was held by the demonic forces, and the tail end by the gods. The head is the end from which fiery breath issues, while the tail end is peaceful. All the venom is in the mouth of the snake, so the fiery, solar end was given to the demons to handle and the peaceful end was given to the gods. The churning started, and one by one, eleven most celebrated precious objects *(ratnas)* came out, followed by the deadliest of all poisons *(balabal).* All the gods and demons became agitated, but Lord Shiva remained unperturbed. On the instigation of his shakti, Gauri took the poison and put it in his throat, which became blue, and from that day Shiva had two new names: Akshobha (or Akshobhya), because of his being unagitated by pleasure or pain (poison or nectar), and Nilkanth, the one with a blue neck. Tara is the shakti of this Akshobhya Shiva and is also, like Mahakali, another form of the Divine Mother Gauri. After Lord Shiva drank the poison, the agitation and

discomfort that troubled the gods and the demons were finished. Finally the nectar appeared in a pot *(kalash)* held by the divine medicine man and alchemist Dhanwantari.

Tara is Bhav-Tarini (ferrying across the ocean of relative existence, the samsara) and Bhaya-Harini (remover of the fear of the troublemaking water). Navigators should remember her so as to be saved from the fear of storms, and people living near riverbanks should call on her when in fear of floods. Water is produced by tanmatra of rasa (taste). Water is also synonymous with life in Sanskrit. Water *is* life, for 80 percent of the material content of our body is water. Water is also the best solvent: almost everything dissolves in it. Moreover, it is the binding material of all the elements. Worship of Tara removes problems caused by water, which is itself neutral and accepts almost everything and converts itself into that substance. The seat of water in our body is the second chakra, and the seat of taste (rasa) is the tongue, which also is connected with water. The tongue is also connected with speech. This makes Tara also the goddess of speech. In Tibet she is worshiped as Nil Tara (Blue Saraswati). She is the primordial sound, the nada, from which the entire phenomenal world arises. The energized consciousness is the first Shakti Adya, and nada is the second Shakti Dvitya. Tara is also second in order in the ten Mahavidyas and also known as Dvitya. Her form resembles the form of Kali, only her tongue is not protruding like Kali's and she is not holding a chopped-off head in her hand. She has a garland of human heads around her neck, whereas Kali wears a garland of human skulls. Both Kali and Tara are shown on a corpse *(shava).* A human corpse symbolizes the center of the phenomenal world, whose rasa (essence) is being exhausted.

TARA

Tara is the mahavidya which is embodiment of rasa (emotions) and expression, which is speech. She is mentioned in *Brahmand Purana* as guarding the pond of nectar of manas. The name of the pond is manas, which is synonymous with “mind.” Without her permission none can cross that pond. She is attended by many maidens there, who cross the pond singing and dancing, chanting hymns of Tara. Those maidens are her shaktis, who go across the pond of nectar of manas. She is not mentioned as a

Mahavidya in the above-mentioned scripture, but is definitely mentioned as a chief deity with subordinate shaktis guarding the pond of the elixir of life.

Tantra very clearly mentions that siddhi of Tara can be achieved without any meditation, japa, worship, sacrifice, practice, or purification of elements *(bhut-shuddhi),* as mentioned in the following mantra:

BINA DHYANAM JAPYAM BINA BINA
POOJADI-BHI PRIYE
BINA BALIM BINA ABHYASAM
BHUTSHUDDHIADIBHIR BINA
BINA KLESHADIBHIRDEVI DEHA
DUKHADIBEUR BINA
SIDDHIRASHU
BHAVEDSMATSMATSARVOTTMA MATA

Without dhyana (meditation), without japa (constant repetition of her name or mantra), and without any kind of ritualistic worship.

Without sacrifice, without any regular practice, and without purification of elements.

Without getting out of the psychological problems (which are required to be solved for achieving one-pointedness) and widiout resolving problems caused by the physical body (asana, pranayama).

Siddhi of Tara is possible just by remembering her with true devotion. If one just calls her name at die moment of distress, she appears and helps.

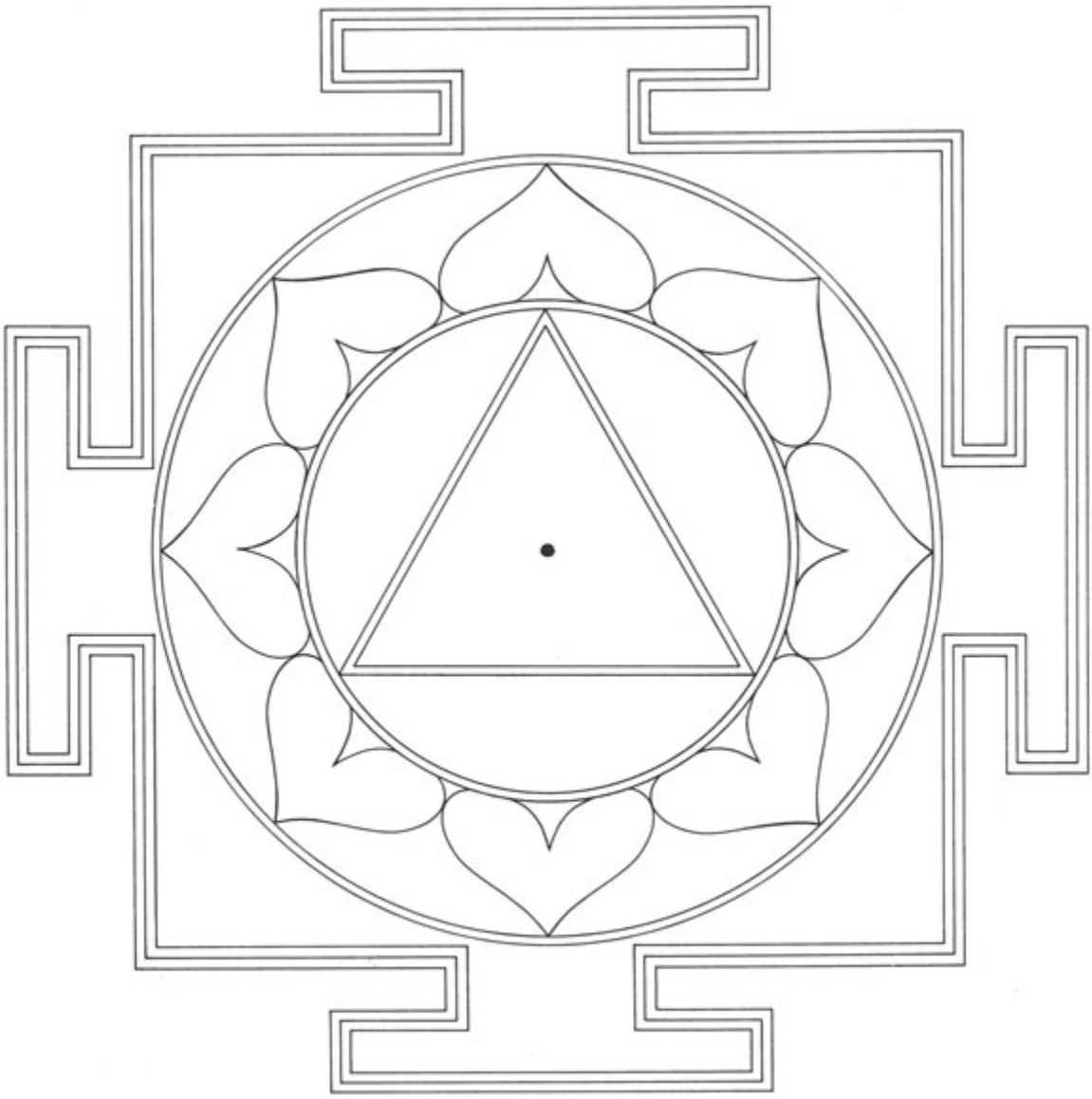
The aspirant who adopts Tara as deity is not bothered by any rules and regulations (yama and niyamas). He does not need to observe any discipline. Remembering her only is sufficient. This makes her a goddess for anyone and everyone.

Tara Yantra

Tara’s yantra is the simplest and the most powerful yantra. The bhupur is of beautiful viridian leaf-green color, the same as in Ganesh Yantra or Shri Yantra. Green is balance, which is needed to cross the ocean of samsara *(bhava-sagar).* Meditation on green produces its complementary color, red. Red is a color of inspiration, free flowing, revolution against existing values (rules and regulations).

The petals are of rose-pink color. Pink is representative of shyness. Meditation on this color creates frankness. The symbolism of eight petals has been explained above under “Kali Yantra.”

The upward-pointing triangle is colored with vermilion, the color of rage (because Tara resembles Kali in her form). Tara also is the one who destroys fear created by storms and floods. Because of her connection with speech, the vermilion triangle has been set over the violet or purple shade of akasha, the element of the fifth chakra, considered to be the seat of Saraswati, goddess of knowledge. Nadi Saraswati is one out of the fourteen principle nadis mentioned in Tantric scriptures. This nadi terminates at the tongue, the vehicle of speech, and it is commonly said that Saraswati resides on the tongue of the wise. Meditation on this vermilion triangle, which forms the background of the golden bindu, creates green. Thus we see that meditation on the green bhupur creates vermilion and meditation on the vermilion triangle produces green. This balance is the key of Tara. It is balance which is *tarak* (carrier). The boat *(tarini)* is able to float and travel across because of this balance. The color green is neutral, neither hot nor cold, being a combination of hot yellow and cold blue. Vermilion is a color of violence, and green pacifies it. First the meditation is done on the green bhupur to produce life (survival of the fittest, based on aggression); then on red (vermilion), which produces green and establishes balance. In the end the meditation is on bindu—the Shakti Tara.



TARA YANTRA

TRIPUR SUNDARI (Shodashi)

Tri is *three, pur* is worlds, and *Sundari* is beautiful maiden. The most beautiful goddess, who is unrivaled in her beauty in the three worlds, is Tripur Sundari. *Shodash* means sixteen, and *Shodashi* means “one who is sixteen years old.” All these names are attributes of the same Divine Mother who is the fountainhead of all beauty and ever-young. As long as the fear of death—because of physical

attachment—is present, she is Kali; as long as emotional turmoil exists and freedom from all rules and regulations is sought, she is Tara. But when these two basic fears are taken care of, she is Shodashi, the source of inspiration, and Tripur Sundari, the fountain-head of beauty. Tantrics believe that Kali, Tara, and Shodashi are the three main vidyas of the ten Mahavidyas. From these three principles came nine vidyas, or nine different combinations of the three. The three originally came from one which is their essence or complement. This one (the Mul Vidya, or root vidya) is the tenth Maha-vidya. That one which is the Mul Vidya is Shri Vidya or Brahma Vidya. So in fact Tripura or Tripur Sundari herself is Shri Vidya. Shri is Tripura because she is beyond the three gunas. She dwells in the three worlds of manas, buddhi, and chitta. She is the Mother of the three gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, so she is Trayi, the unified combination of the three. She is also known as Lalita (the graceful one) and Kameshwari (the desire principle of the Supreme).

As explained before, Tantra believes desire to be the secret of this phenomenal world, the creation. This desire first separates the shakti from the shaktiman, and when it has achieved its highest state in evolution—the human body—it seeks union. Desire in Sanskrit is called Kama, and she is the one who becomes the individual consciousness; the sleeping kundalini stays in Muladhara Chakra until the desire for union becomes so powerful that the individual consciousness starts doing sadhana and the goddess is awakened. Then she rushes through the brahmanadi toward the Kameshwara Chakra, piercing all six chakras and dissolving all the elements. She reaches above the Som Chakra, where Kameshwar Shiva is seated, and as Tripur Sundari, Lalita, or Kameshwari she unites with him and remains in union in turiya.

As Kali she is kundalini in Muladhara Chakra and, when invoked, removes the fear of death and basic insecurity.

As Tara she takes the sadhak across the turmoil of the mental modifications, appearing as high and low tides of emotions, while he is floating in the ocean of samsara.

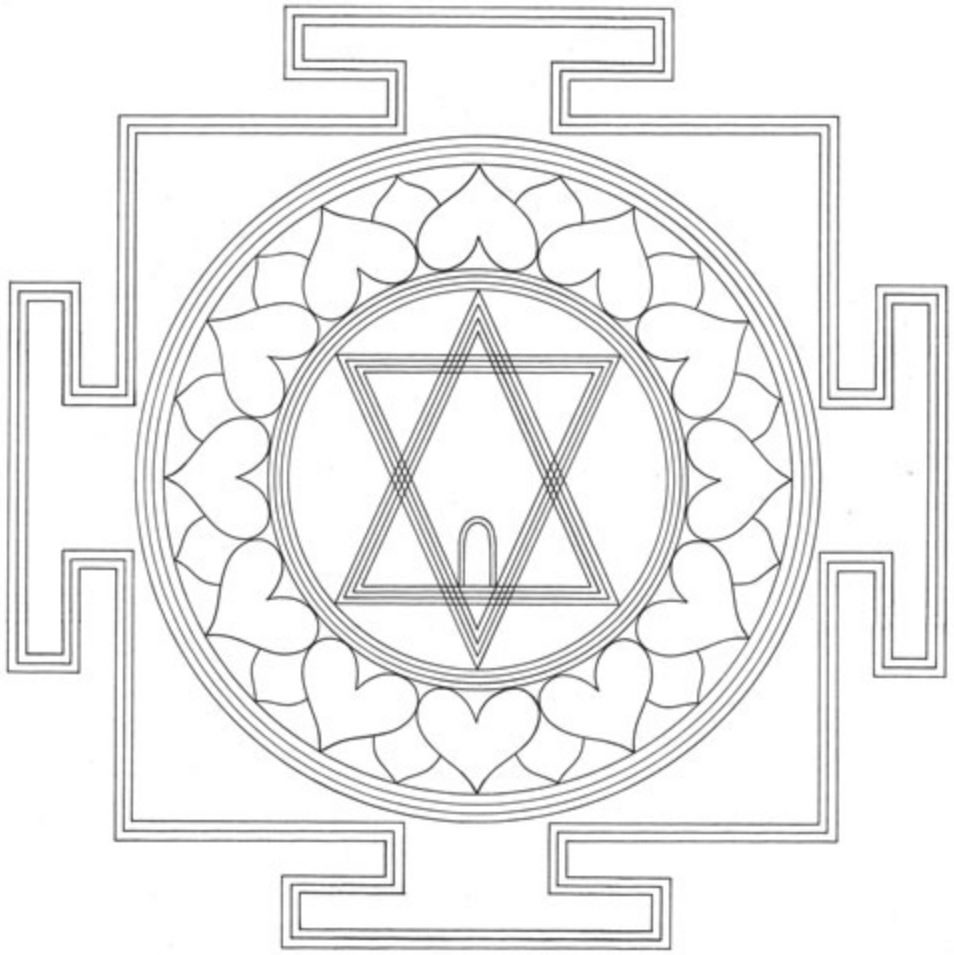
As Shodashi she brings transcendental awareness.

Because the goddess is also associated with Shri Vidya, her yantra is sometimes Shri Yantra or Shri Chakra itself, but in the *Shakta Pramod* scripture a separate yantra is given for Shodashi, and Shri Yantra is not included in the yantras of Dash Mahavidyas. I have selected the yantra of Shodashi and have included Shri Yantra also, as separate from the Shodashi Yantra. All the ten Mahavidyas are one, but as one vidya they do not perform specific functions, so they have to achieve ten different forms to perform their specific functions. Shri Yantra is also associated with Shri (Lakshmi), and Vaishnavas also worship it, but Shri is included in the ten Mahavidyas as Kamala. A yantra for Kamala also exists, so I have kept Shri Yantra separate from the yantras of the ten Mahavidyas (as the eleventh yantra for Shaktis) and will not discuss Shri Yantra here.

Shodashi Yantra

The bhupur is of a dark green color. This darkness in color is because of the darkness of Saturn, which is associated with the seventh chakra. It is the darkness of the corpus callosum, also known as andh-kup, the blind well. Meditation on this color produces bright vermilion and removes basic or primary fears and instincts.

TRIPUR SUNDARI
(Shodashi)



TRIPUR SUNDARI YANTRA

The three rings represent the three worlds, the three aspects of consciousness, will (ichcha), action (kriya), and knowledge (gyana). The three worlds are the three states of consciousness: waking state (jagrat), dreaming sleep (svapna), and dreamless sleep (sushupti).

The twenty-four petals are representatives of the twenty-four elements. The color of the lotus petals of the three mahavidyas is almost the same, with slight variation. In Tara it is more transparent because of the water element, which is itself very transparent. The effect of meditation is almost the same as discussed before.

Then there are three rings for the three phases of time—past, present, and future.

The two sets of three intersecting upward-and downward-pointing isosceles triangles form a six-pointed star, a little different in form from the Star of David, which consists of two equilateral triangles. These six triangles are set in a pure dark background and are of an effulgent gold color. The dark background is the andh-kup. Meditation on a black point creates an effulgent golden orange, a color that inspires.

On the base of the upward-pointing innermost triangle is a lingam, the symbol of Kameshwar Shiva.

In the center is the bindu, which is Shodashi herself.

BHUVANESHWARI

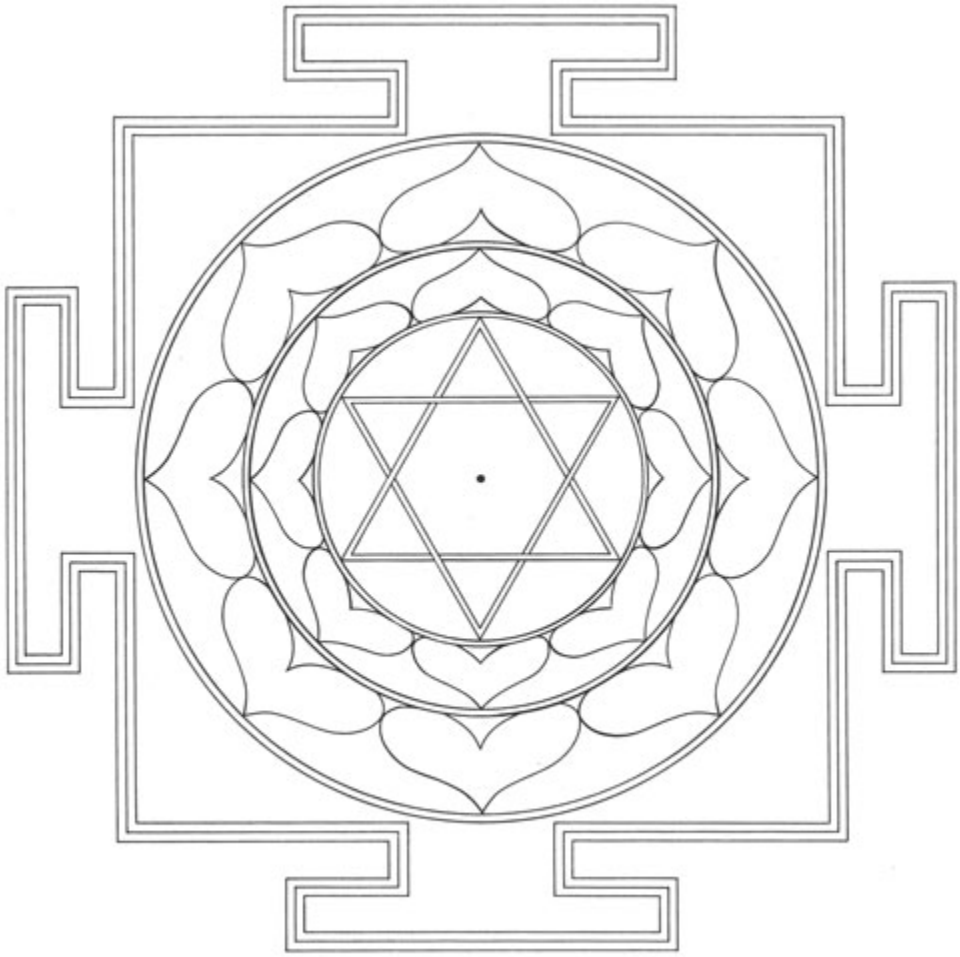
The Sanskrit word *bhuvan* means phenomenal world. There are three lokas (planes) and fourteen bhuvanas (worlds). *Bhuvaneshwari* means the Ishvari (the sovereign, the queen, of the total existing phenomenal world).

In the *Devi Bhagwat Purana* there is a story about Bhuvaneshwari: Once Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva quarreled over which of them was the Supreme. When the quarrel became serious and each started using his powers to prove his supremacy, the Divine Mother intervened and took them with her to her abode, where Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva saw themselves as her three women-attendants and realized their mistake. They had been deluded by the illusory maya shakti and had forgotten that they were only tools used for creation, preservation, and destruction. Their source was the same, and they were only three aspects of her infinite energy. Thus Tantric scriptures claim that the Maha-vidya Bhuvaneshwari is the same prime force, Parashakti, which manifests herself as the phenomenal world. All gods and subgods are but her manifestations. As time she is Kali and as space she is Bhuvaneshwari. Shodashi is the Ichcha Shakti, and Bhuvaneshwari is Gyan

Shakti. At the time when Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva got involved in their quarrel they were dominated by ignorance (agyan), and Bhuvaneshwari, as Gyan Shakti, showed them their real self. Thus ended the quarrel, and the three gods worshiped her. The verses given in *Devi Bhagwat* as the hymns sung by Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva in praise of the goddess Bhuvaneshwari are the best verses of the knowledge of Shakti Advaita.

Bhuvaneshwari is the Divine Mother as the sovereign of the existing bhuvanas and not the separated young Shodashi who desires union. The desire for union turns Shodashi away from existing phenomena, which are as real as the spirit. Bhuvaneshwari as Raj-Rajeshwari—the Queen—is interested in the welfare of her subjects and presides over the existing phenomena. She is in the phenomena as Parashakti and in the individual consciousness as Gyan Shakti. Her seat is the heart of the phenomenal world and the heart chakra in the individual consciousness, the jiva, the sadhaka. Her bija sound is the same as the bija sound of maya; that is why she is called Maya. Maya is the illusory power, and all we know as the manifested world and its knowledge is maya. This maya leads to false identification with the body, which is the strength of the first three chakras, but maya becomes the presence of the Divine in the existing illusion of reality. Through the worship of Bhuvaneshwari the divine plan is realized and the illusory nature of maya becomes the play of the divine lila. This realization brings about a change in both the emotions and the body chemistry—a change in consciousness and awareness.

BHUVANESHWARI



BHUVANESHWARI YANTRA

Bhuvaneshwari Yantra

The bhupur is of chrome yellow (with a touch of vermilion and white). Yellow is the color of knowledge, and knowledge produces bliss. Meditation on yellow produces a shimmering, effulgent violet, the color of akasha, which takes one into a deep meditative state that gives awareness.

The circular band of the eight-petaled lotus is a light saffron color. The color has been a favorite of lovers of knowledge, the ascetics. Its character is different from that of orange. The eight petals are the octave of experience: merit, demerit, right apprehension, wrong apprehension, detachment, attachment, mastery, and slavery. These eight

are four pairs of opposites, which are the basic characteristics of the human brain, the cerebral cortex, the maya.

The second circular band of the eight-petaled lotus is of a slightly lighter or the same chrome yellow as used in the bhupur, with a touch of white. These eight petals are the octave of prakriti—the five elements and three gunas.

A light purple six-pointed star composed of two equilateral triangles is the center of the yantra, in the center of which is the bindu, Bhuvaneshwari herself. This hexagram of six-pointed star of effulgent violet is set in a white (neutral) background. White is not a true color; it is the color of light, inside of which there is the full spectrum. White does not absorb light but reflects it back; thus it is synonymous with knowledge, in contrast to black, which absorbs all colors, is a negation of light, and is synonymous with ignorance. Meditation on the effulgent purple hexagram produces the yellow of knowledge, and thus the whole yantra is composed of complementary colors, creating balance.

TRIPUR BHAIRAVI

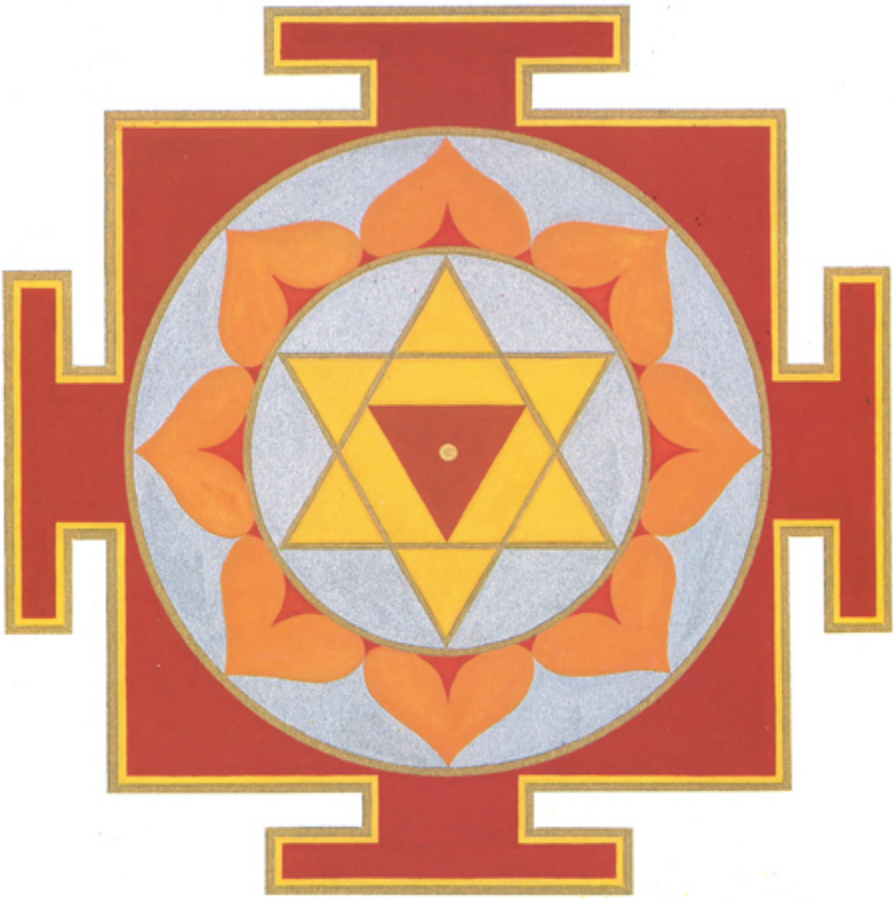
Tri means three, *pura* means plane of existence (the loka), and Bhairavi is the Shakti of Bhairava, the ruthless Shiva. So Tripur Bhairavi is the Divine Mother who is immanent on the three planes of existence, the physical, astral, and celestial planes, known as *bhu, bhuvah,* and *swar* (or bhuloka, bhuvarloka and swargloka). She is the shakti of Kal-Bhairava, also known as Dakshinamurti. Thus she has some affinity with Kali. Kali is Kundalini and her seat is the Muladhara Chakra in the human organism. The seat of Tripur Bhairavi also is in the Muladhara inside the *mul trikon*—the downward-pointing triangle of the base chakra. Kali destroys the fear of death (kala); Tripur Bhairavi destroys the nine impediments of mind: sickness, incompetence, doubt,

delusion, sloth, nonabstention, erroneous conception, nonattainment of any yogic state, and the inability to stay in a yogic state. These are the nine obstacles that create fear.

Tripur Bhairavi terrifies those who cling to their nine impediments and who keep her away from union with her lord, who is seated in the highest chakra. In this aspect she is similar to Tripur Sundari. As Tripur Sundari she is the primordial desire—Ichcha Shakti—and as Tripur Bhairavi she is the Kriya Shakti—activity aspect of the sleeping Tripura (the dormant kundalini in Muladhar). As Shodashi (Tripur Sundari) she is desirous of union, and as Tripur Bhairavi she destroys all the obstacles that restrict her from the Great Union. She is radiant like the rising sun, wearing red garments and a garland of human heads. The crescent moon adds glory to her crown, which is the same as the crown of Tripur Sundari.

Tripur Bhairavi is the latent potential of Tripur Sundari. She makes the upward movement of energy possible and acts like a savior of those who desire to progress. Her worship leads the sadhak to experience the upward flow of the seminal fluid. She helps those who have overcome lust, anger, avarice, spiritual ignorance, pride, and envy, which are great enemies of spiritual growth and of the awakening of kundalini and its ascent, even if it is awakened by the grace of the Guru *(shaktipat),* because the enemies of human consciousness keep the energy flowing in lower three chakras and consume the nectar pouring from the Som Chakra. Without the grace of Tripur Bhairavi, this nectar cannot be absorbed by the sadhak, who may have a terrifying kundalini experience. This fate can be avoided with the grace of Tripur Bhairavi and constant practice of sama, dama, uparati, titiksha, samadhan, and shraddha.

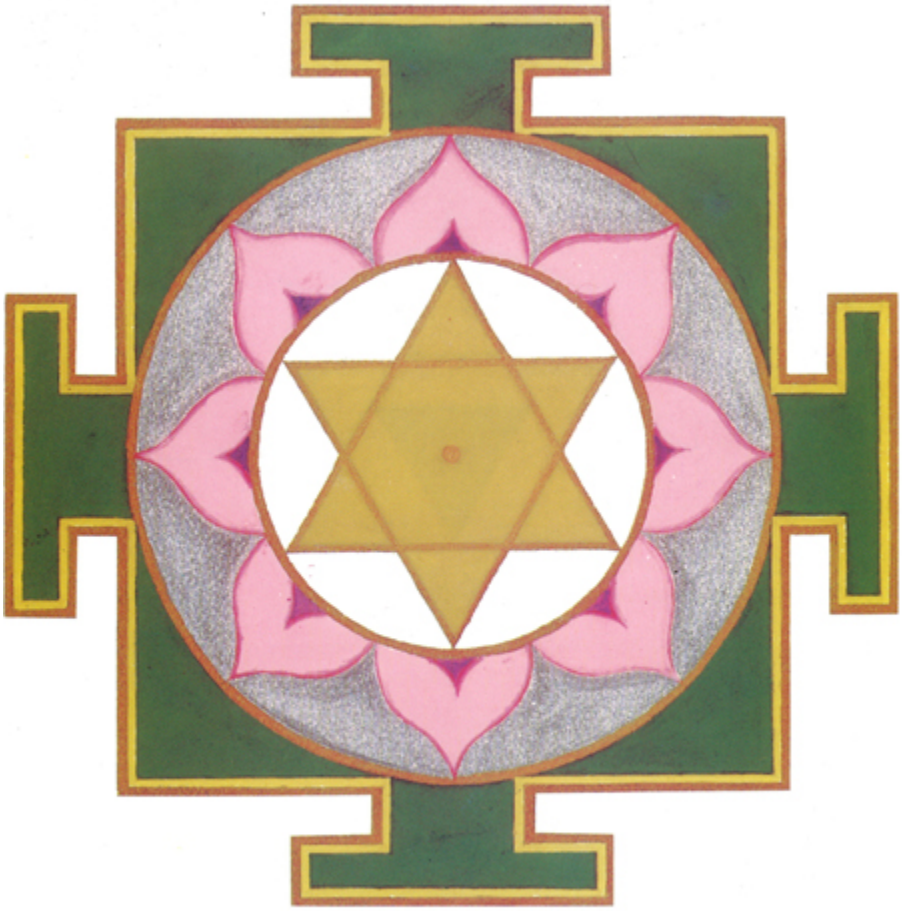
Plate 13



BAGLA MUKHI

बागलामुखी यन्त्र

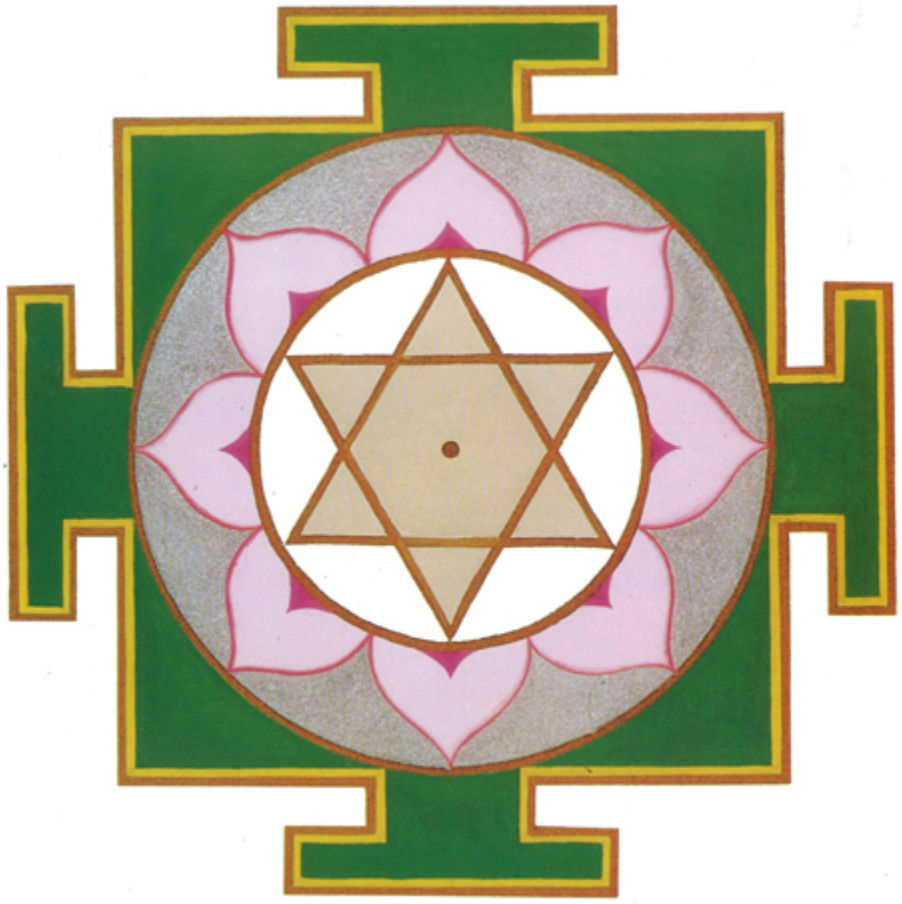
Plate 14



MATANGI

मातङ्गी यन्त्र

Plate 15



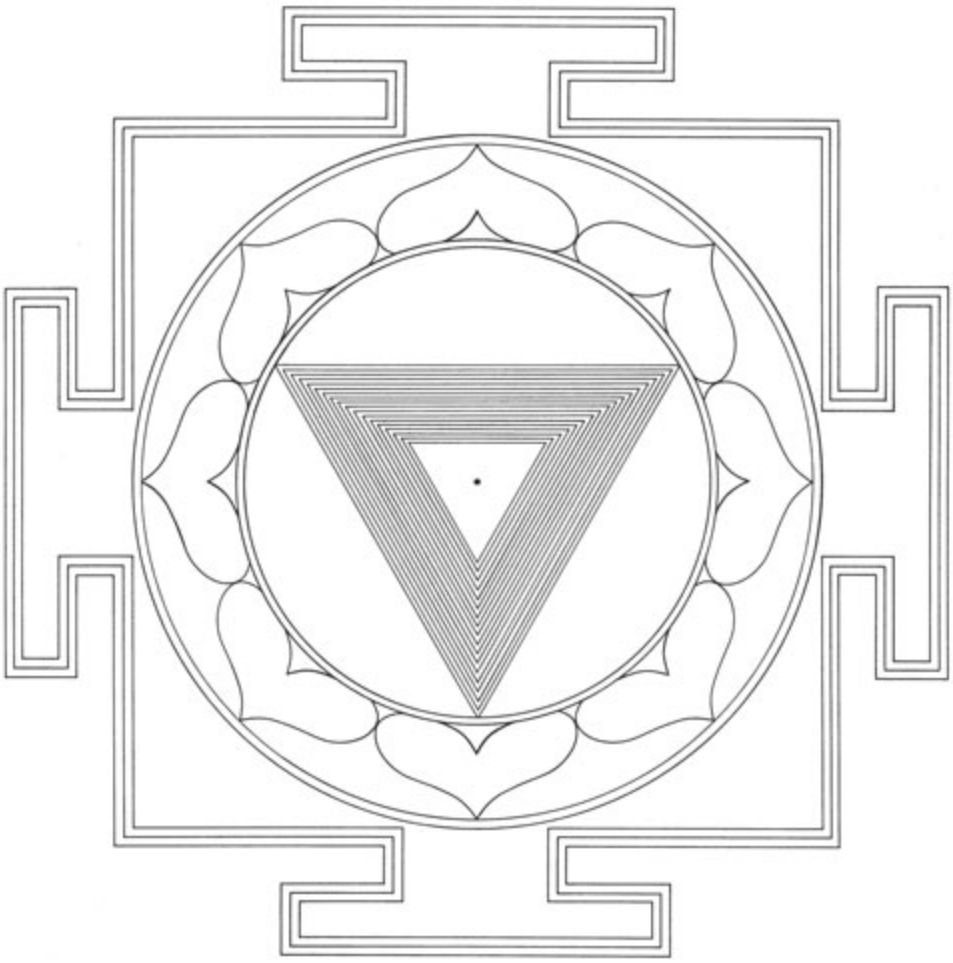
KAMLA

कमला यन्त्र

Plate 16

DURGA

TRIPUR BHAIRAVI



TRIPUR BHAIRAVI YANTRA

Tripur Bhairavi Yantra

The bhupur is a dark green shade, darker than that of Tara or Tripur Sundari. The effect of meditation on this green is the same as discussed above in reference to Tara and Tripur Sundari.

The eight-petaled lotus of scarlet red, the color of violence and aggression, produces the green of love and harmony. The eight petals symbolize the five elements and the three antahkaran—mind, intellect, and ego.

The nine downward-pointing triangles of golden color are the basic nine energies; nine nadis, also known as nine durgas (Tripur Bhairavi in many aspects resembles Durga). The number nine is a number of completion.

1 is symbolic of being, spiritual unity, and light.
2 is symbolic of reflection, conflict, dualism, bisexuality, change.
3 is symbolic of spiritual synthesis, trinity, the gunas.
4 is symbolic of terrestrial space, earth, the cross, the swastika.
5 is symbolic of the human being, health, love, the senses.
6 is symbolic of equilibrium, the union of pairs of opposites (male and female, fire and water), and the six directions of space, and is associated with trial and effort.
7 is symbolic of perfect order, complete cycles, seven musical notes, seven colors of the rainbow, and seven chakras.
8 is symbolic of regeneration, the eternal spiral, and the balancing of opposite forces (static and dynamic).
9 is symbolic of the complete image of the three worlds, physical force, energy, ambition, power, fulfillment.

These triangles are set in a purple background little darker than that of Tara, as explained in reference to Tara Yantra.

In the center is the bindu, which is Tripur Bhairavi herself.

CHINNAMASTA

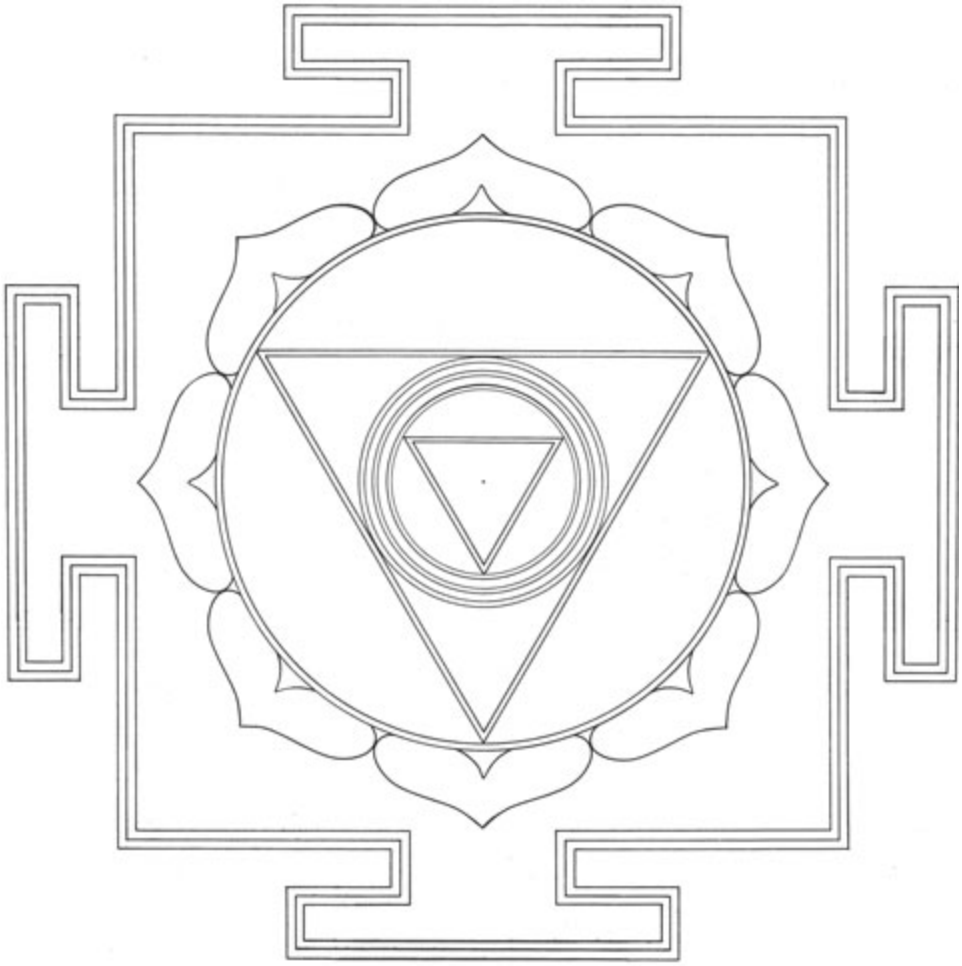
Chinna means “chopped off,” and *masta* is *mastak,* or head. Chinnamasta is a goddess who has chopped off her own head. The head is the seat of all activities of mind, so with the cutting off of this head, the activities of mind—the mental modifications *(vrittis)*—are stopped, which is the goal of Yoga as defined by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras.*

Chinnamasta is seen dancing the cosmic dance of destruction *(tandava,* the famous dance of Shiva, who

performs it to bring an end to the phenomenal world). The phenomenal world is a playground of worldly desires. The five sense organs, which are agents of these desires, have their seat in the head, that is, the brain. The chopped-off head symbolizes the cessation of these five senses, which enhances the sixth sense, intuition, whose seat is the sixth psychic center (ajna or agya chakra).

The goddess is dancing with her two associate dakinis (sub-shaktis), who are on her left and right side, and the dance is performed on the body of Kama, the desire principle. Kama is shown in sexual communion with his wife, Rati, and Chinnamasta is dancing on his spine. From her headless neck flow three streams of fresh blood, which is being drunk by three heads. Two heads of the two dakinis on the right and left side and the central stream by her own head, which she holds in her left hand.

CHINNAMASTA



CHINNAMASTA YANTRA

In their left hands the two dakinis hold two chopped-off heads, and in their right hands they hold a *khang(a* swordlike weapon, broad at the end) smeared with blood. They are dancing with the goddess and at the same time drinking her blood. Like Kali, she is naked and wears a garland of human skulls, and her tongue is protruding. The total image has some affinity with that of Kali. Kali is known as the fierce one, the Chandi, and Chinnamasta is even fiercer than Kali and known as Prachand Chandi. *Shakta Pramod* scripture says: “She is that Paratpara Shakti who is the Para Dakini named Bhagwati.” *Para* means beyond and primordial.

She is the shakti of Kabandh Shiva, the one who destroys the phenomenal world at the time of *pralaya* (annihilation),

the shakti who is beyond even the primordial nature, *paraprakriti.*

The three streams of blood coming from the neck represent the three nadis, the ida, pingala, and sushumna. Her two attendants drink ida and pingala, and she herself drinks sushumna. This explains the loss of her head, the seat of the desires, located in the five chakras, which are up to the neck, and the head, which is separate. The first five chakras are ruled by the brain stem, the controller of basic instincts. The chopped-off head is the seat of higher consciousness, the cerebral cortex and its two hemispheres. The cosmic dance of destruction is performed on the spine of Kama, the principle of desire, while he is in sexual communion with his wife, Rati. In other words, Chinnamasta is the shakti which takes her sadhak away from sensuous involvement, grants him the upward flow of energy, complete control over the sexual impulse and other primary impulses and instincts. She is located in sushumna, which destroys ignorance. Only sushumna goes up to the cerebral cortex, the seat of higher consciousness.

Worship of Chinnamasta brings power of will and vision. While meditating on her, one must see her dancing on one’s own spine and concentrate on her head drinking the middle stream of blood coming out of her headless neck.

Chinnamasta Yantra

The bhupur is black. (In some yantra drawings from different schools it is supposed to be dark green.) The effect of meditation on green (dark) has been discussed. Concentration on black empties the mind and produces an effulgent orange, similar to the radiant color of the rising sun.

The eight-petaled lotus symbolizes the five external and three internal senses. Sometimes these petals are colored pink, as for the Tara Yantra.

The big downward-pointing triangle symbolizes the primordial prakriti, the parashakti, inside of which are the three gunas.

The three concentric circles represent the three gunas.

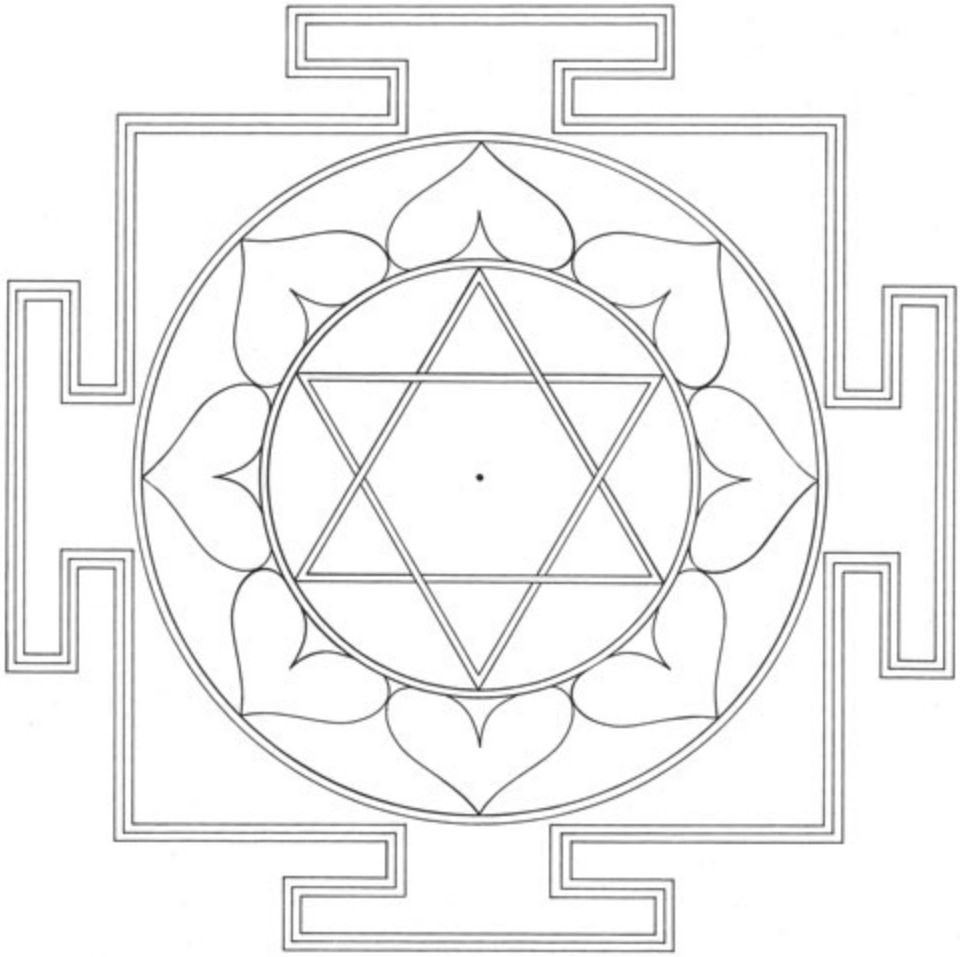
The triangle inside these concentric circles represents the Paratpara (beyond the paraprakriti) Shakti. This triangle is also downward-pointing.

The bindu inside this triangle is Chinnamasta herself.

DHUMAVATI

Dhumavati (*dhuma* = smoke, *vati* = beholder) is the beholder of smoke, or the smoky form of Shakti. She is also known as Vidhya, Widow, or Purush-Shunya, the one without a purusha. Purusha is male, so she is the one without her male counterpart—a Shakti without Shiva, the eternal widow. She is also called the Jeyastha, the oldest shakti; Kutila, the crooked one; and Kalahaspada, the quarrelsome one. Her hair is dry and tangled, and she is dressed in dirty rags. She is riding a chariot, which bears a flag with a black crow inscribed on it. She is ferocious, ugly, and dark in complexion. In her left hand she holds a *shurp,* an object like a dust collector made of straw, used for cleaning grains in India. She is also called Alakshmi, one who is without any *lakshmi* (wealth of Shri = radiance), the one who is poor. Lakshmi is the goddess of beauty or aesthetics, and Dhumavati is her opposite, ugly and unaesthetic. She is called Dhumra-Varahi, the smoky shakti of Varah. As she is a widow, she is not the spouse of Varah, the boar incarnation of Vishnu.

DHUMAVATI



DHUMAVATI YANTRA

Dhumavati is the Divine Mother at the time of deluge, when the earth is under water. Her big, broad, ugly teeth arouse fear. She is holding a shurp in her left hand and is blessing with her right hand those who still can see the divine being, the Divine Mother, in her. The black crow on her chariot and flag is the symbol of dark forces, black magic. She is Chanchala, the restless one, without any decoration, unorganized. Her face is distorted, wrinkled, and lifeless, and in her eyes is a harsh look.

Dhumavati is the Divine Mother in distorted form. She is unorganized energy, which is destructive, because life is a product of organization, i.e., organism. The sadhak who has not reached a higher state of consciousness will feel aversion to her form. Sadhana of Dhumavati is Tantra's

unique feature, which enables the sadhak to achieve a higher state of consciousness, the nondual state, which leads to total awareness.

As Shiva without Shakti is the shava—a dead body—so is the Shakti without a Shiva awesome, quarrelsome, ugly, unaesthetic, crooked, dark, unorganized, and poor. She is unenergized energy, a state prior to the state of conscious energy.

The worship of Dhumavati is performed to invoke the dark forces of maran, uchchatan, and vidweshan. It is done in a completely naked state in a crematorium or in a lonely spot in the descending moon cycle on the darkest night.

Dhumavati Yantra

The bhupur is smoky gray or dark bluish purplish green, the color of hatred. Meditation on this color produces a reddish, effulgent orange, which strengthens the primary instincts and removes the obstacles produced by them.

The eight-petaled lotus of smoky violet color represents the eightfold prakriti in its preevolu-tionary state. Five petals are the five tanmatras of sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell, from which evolve the five elements:

From sound, akasha
From touch, air
From sight, fire
From taste, water
From smell, earth

The three petals are bindu, bij, and nada:

From bindu evolves gyan (knowledge)
From bij evolves ichcha (will)
From nada evolves kriya (action)

This is the octave of creation before the formation of intellect, ego, and mind and the five elements.

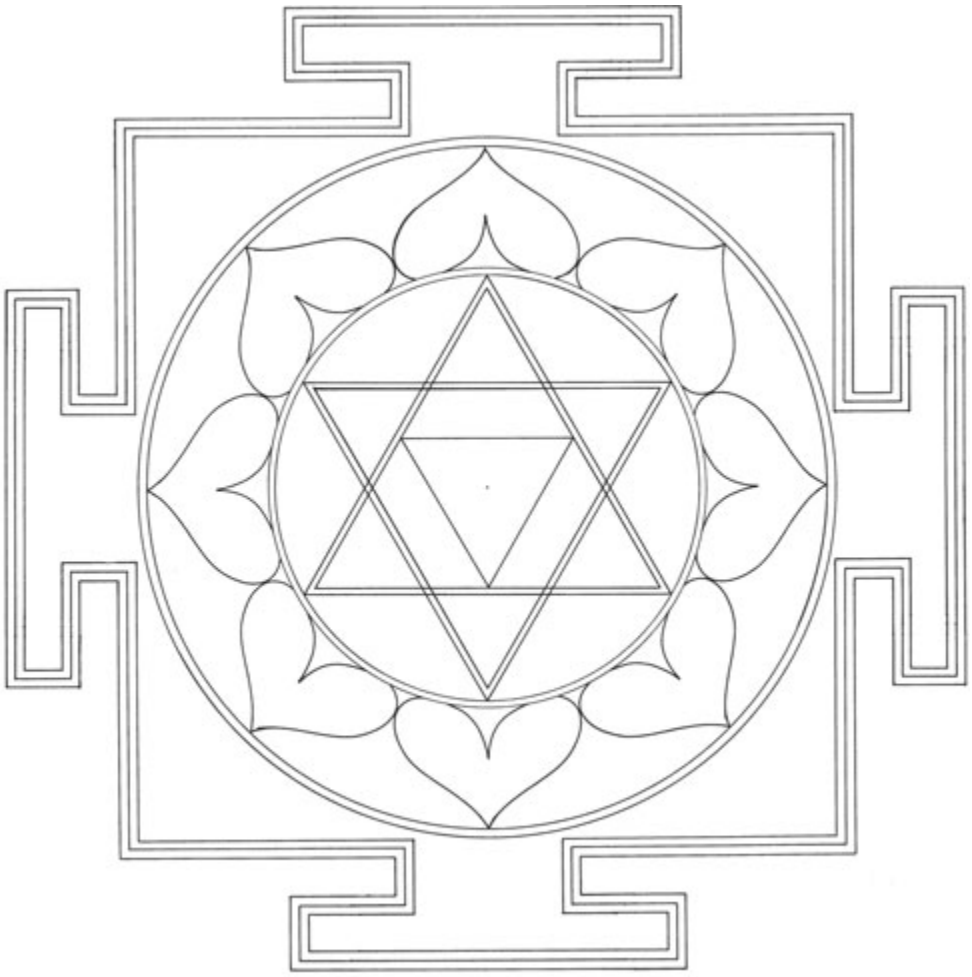
The hexagram of two equilateral triangles superimposed on each other, as explained before, is of yellow ocher with a touch of green (viridian) and white with a touch of black, the color of lifeless, dry earth. Meditation in this color produces shimmering violet and enhances akasha, which is the color of smoke. The hexagram is set in a very light purple background, which produces the yellow color of light.

The bindu is in the center of this hexagram and is the goddess Dhumavati herself.

BAGLA MUKHI

The word *bagla* is a transformation of the word *valga,* used in Tantric scripture. Valga is the goddess’s Vedic name. It means the Powerful One.

BAGLA MUKHI



BAGLA MUKHI YANTRA

In the scripture *Shatpath Brahman,* there is a *shruti* (canto) which explains her might; *valga* means “power to bridle.” Valga is the carrier of the power of stopping speech. She is the Kritya Shakti—the dynamic or kinetic aspect of Shakti.

Bagla Mukhi is thus a powerful goddess who converts a speaker into a mute, a king into a beggar, opposition into favor, anger into calm, vice into virtue, learning into ignorance. By her grace the sadhak can paralyze enemies, arrest their speech, stop the flow of natural objects like wind or clouds, remove obstacles from his way, attain victory in contests, and become famous.

She is meditated on as a yellow goddess wearing yellow clothing and ornaments, holding a *gada* (club) in her right

hand and the tongue of a vicious demonic opposing force with her left hand. She is invoked to attain victory over opposing forces, to remove obstacles, and to paralyze natural forces momentarily. She stupefies opponents and therefore is invoked in Istambhan Karma and Vidweshan Karma. The sadhak is supposed to wear yellow dress (which is common in most of the worship and rituals) and use a rosary made of haldi (turmeric), the yellow root. The color yellow is the color of life-giving light, the color of knowledge, a color that repels germs, the color prescribed for the dress of a *brahmachari* (celibate, seeker of knowledge, student). Yellow is luminous and when combined with any color increases in brightness.

The direction prescribed for meditation on Bagla Mukhi is east, the direction of receiving light for our planet. The aspirant sits facing east in a convenient asana and practices pranayama. During the kumbhak in pranayama (performed by holding the breath), the sadhak should meditate on the bij mantra HRING.

By the grace of Bagla Mukhi the sadhak is able to gain siddhis and can do miracles, eliminate those who pose obstacles to him, and create a suitable atmosphere for himself. The worship of Bagla Mukhi provides perfect security and harmony, and makes the sadhak self-confident, courageous, independent, and invincible.

Bagla Mukhi Yantra

The bhupur is mauve or maroon with a mixture of chrome yellow. This is the color of fear. It produces dark green in the body, which removes fear and hatred.

The eight-petaled lotus of the manifested eightfold prakriti symbolizes the five elements and the three gunas. The color of the petals is saffron, another shade of yellow, as in Bhuvaneshwari.

The hexagram, made of two equilateral triangles overlapping each other, is of the color of the goddess herself. The color yellow produces the violet, explained in reference to the bhupur of Bhuvaneshwari.

A downward-pointing triangle in the hexagram, of the same color as the bhupur, represents the goddess in her paralyzing, stupefying power.

The yellow bindu in the center of the triangle is the goddess Bagla Mukhi herself.

MATANGI

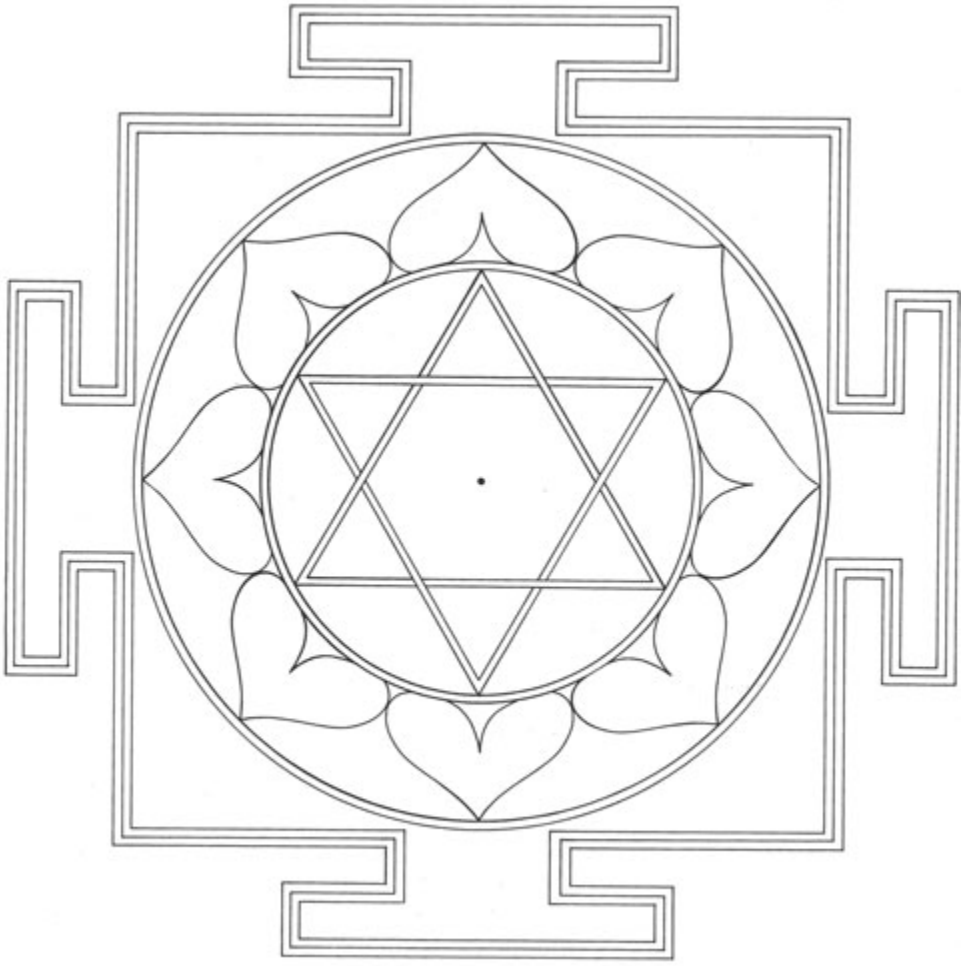
Matangi is to be meditated on as she is described in the following mantra:

> MANIKYA VEENA MAPU LALYANTI,
> MADALASAM MANJUL VAGVILASAM
> MAHENDRA NIL DYUTI KOMALANGI,
> MATANG KANYA MANSA ISMRAMI.
>
> The one who has an enchanting *vina* embedded with rubies. The one who has intoxicating beauty and whose speech is charming. The one who is tenderly built and has the glow of a blue sapphire. That *kanya* [daughter] of Matang should be meditated on.

She is supposed to be Shyama (the Dark One), of a beautiful emerald-green color. She is called Chandali because she was born as the daughter of Matang Rishi, who was from the lowest caste, known as Chandal. Matang Rishi is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana,* the two famous Indian epics. He was a highly evolved being who did not believe in the orthodox caste system and wanted to achieve brahminhood through his karma. He worshiped Indra and on Indra’s advice invoked Saraswati the Vagdevi (the goddess of speech), who appeared before him and promised to become his daughter. Thus Matangi was born as the daughter of Matang Rishi. She was Saraswati, or the

energy of Saraswati, and was unequaled in her intellect. (The word for intellect in Sanskrit is *mati;* the name *Matangi* comes from the same root.) She was adored by men and women, and because she was named after her father, he gained a reputation to which only brahmins are entitled. Matangi is the goddess of speech, music, and writing.

MATANGI



MATANGI YANTRA

She is meditated on as seated on a beautiful *ratnapith* (throne embedded with precious gems), radiant like the moon, charming, tender, of dark complexion, having nicely braided hair, dressed in red garments, playing beautiful music with her vina decorated with radiant rubies. She wears beautiful ornaments, has a parrot that recites enchanting verses in a human voice, and has a pot made of a beautiful conch shell.

Her seat in the human body is the throat, the fifth chakra, which also happens to be the seat of the goddess Saraswati. Saraswati is more sattvic and is dressed all in white, but she also has a vina in her hand. The vina is supposed to be a replica of the human body. It is an instrument made of two pumpkin gourds and one long, unknotted bamboo stalk. The

two gourds help to produce deep sounds and sympathetic overtones, which influence the emotions of the listener. The stalk of the vina represents the human spine, and the two gourds are the two ends of the spine—the Muladhara (first chakra) and the Sahasrara (seventh chakra). The strings are nerves, which produce frequencies of emotion.

Matangi is an adviser *(mantrini)* to the goddess Lalita, who is also known as the Tripur Sundari and Raj Rajeshwari—supreme of all Mahavidyas. Her worship leads the aspirant to Tripur Sundari. She is the goddess of speech *(vag),* who gives *vagavilas* (power of oratory, fluency in speech and expression). She enchants everybody with her sweet melodic voice, her music, and her beautiful and attractive personality. She should be invoked to achieve command over speech, creativity, music, knowledge, and fine arts, and to remove disharmony and achieve harmony in life.

Matangi Yantra

The bhupur is of dark olive green (a combination of yellow ocher and olive green and white).

The eight-petaled lotus symbolizes the eightfold prakriti, the five elements and three internal organs (mind, intellect, and ego). The color of the petals is pink.

A six-pointed star of light yellow ocher with a touch of emerald green is set in a neutral white background.

The golden bindu represents Matangi herself.

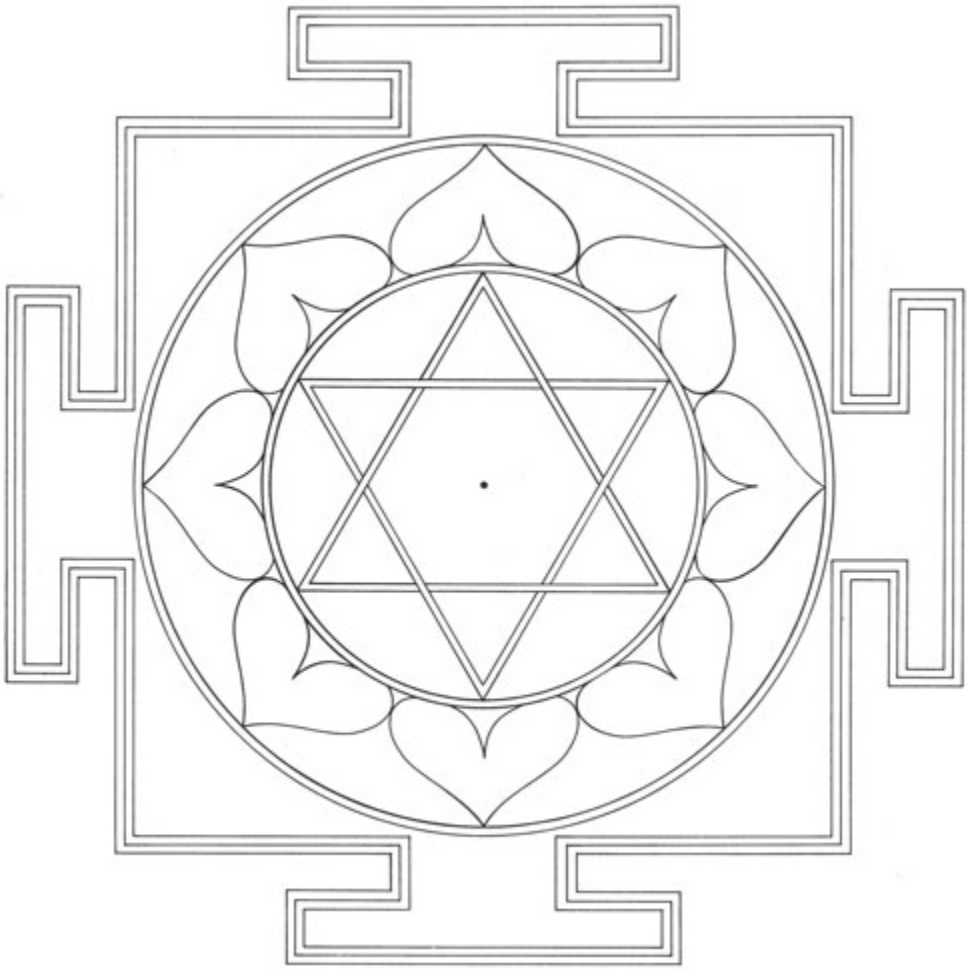
KAMLA

Kamla (or Kamala) is another name of Lakshmi, the consort of Lord Vishnu, the preserver. Because she is seated on a pink lotus she is called Kamla. She is the daughter of the ocean of milk and a sister of the moon god. Both Kamla and the moon emerged from the ocean of milk as a result of

churning of this ocean. The name Kamla also means the one who is clad in water. She is of a luminous golden complexion and is meditated on as sitting on a pink lotus flower. She has four hands. In two hands she holds two beautiful pink lotus flowers. One of the other hands is shown in *abhaya mudra* (gesture granting fearlessness) and the other in *varad mudra* (granting a boon of peace and prosperity). Four huge white elephants are constantly pouring water over her, and she is dressed in a white sari. She is the goddess of peace and prosperity, the remover of poverty of all kinds.

Kamla is also known as Shri, which means radiance and excellence, and Rama, the one who dwells in everybody. Thus she is the support of the phenomenal world. One of the mantras prescribed for her meditation also describes her as holding the golden pot of nectar in her left hand and granting a boon with her right hand. She is supposed to be the most beautiful goddess, a goddess of poise, aesthetic and pure.

KAMLA



KAMLA YANTRA

She is Shri, but not Shodashi, who is supposed to be Kameshwari, Tripur Sundari, or Lalita, because Shodashi is the Shakti of Kameshwara and Lakshmi is the Shakti of Vishnu. The only similarity is the word *shri (sri),* which is associated with Shodashi because she is connected with Shri Vidya. Shri Yantra, which is connected with Shri Vidya, is worshiped by both the worshipers of Lakshmi and those of Tripur Sundari or Shodashi. (But in fact they both have their individual yantras as given in the Dash Mahavidya yantras in the *Shakta Pramod* scripture, and I have included both in this book. The Shri Yantra also has been included because of its visual importance.)

Kamla is the opposite of Dhumavati, and so Dhumavati is also known as Alakshmi. Dhumavati is Jyestha (the older)

and Lakshmi is the Kanishtika (the youngest). Dhumavati is devoid of *shri* (radiance) and is *ruksha* (dry), *daridra* (poor), and *asuri* (crooked, cunning, and demonic). There is also a strange relationship of nakshatras (constellations of the moon) in Dhumavati and Lakshmi-Kamla. Dhumavati is Jyestha Nakshatra, and anyone born under the presence of this nakshatra must suffer with poverty all his or her life, whereas Lakshmi is connected with the Nakshatra Rohini, and one born under the influence of Rohini becomes prosperous and wealthy. Rohini is also the name of one of the most beloved wives of the moon god. Rohini and Jyestha are opposites, exactly 180 degrees apart from each other. One of the other names of Dhumavati is Avrohini, the opposite of Rohini, which means ascending. At the time of Jayestha, the sun is descending and is in the Kanya Lagna (Virgo ascendant), when the sun is least powerful and in its downward movement from Aries to Pisces.

Kamla should be invoked for peace, harmony, progress, and wealth. It is hard to worship her because of her alluring nature. She can only be had by Vishnu, who preserves all. He who wants Lakshmi (wealth) should start sharing with and taking care of everybody around him. When she is pleased and the aspirant becomes wealthy, then his desires for luxuries make him selfish, and selfishness brings all kinds of evils. Thereupon Lakshmi, who is very sensitive and sattvic, moves away. One who takes care of others, preserves their spirit from calamities, helps them, and spends money on them, can have her favor, because then he acts like Vishnu, Lord of Preservation.

Kamla is connected with the lotus, which is a symbol of purity, as it grows in the mud yet is not stained by it. The lotus is also connected with light, as it open at dawn and close at dusk, and can be invoked by purity and knowledge.

Kamla Yantra

The bhupur is a radiant green color.

The eight-petaled lotus is the manifested prakriti (as explained for Matangi Yantra). The color of the petals is pink.

The six-pointed star is a golden saffron color. (She is a sister of Brahma and of the same golden color as he.)

The gold bindu represents Lakshmi-Kamla herself.

CHAPTER SIX

TANTRIC WORSHIP

Tantric worship is a combination of yantra worship and mantra recitation done simultaneously. Many kinds of worship are prescribed according to the nature of the aspirant. The type of worship is also connected with the desire of the aspirant. The worshiper must decide what is the object of worship. Worship done for liberation is different from worship done for the fulfillment of worldly desires. Tantra believes that worship can bring any desired result—that one does not worship only to be liberated from the cycle of life and death and to end suffering. Desires can be fulfilled, sufferings can be brought to an end, the impossible can be made possible. All is possible by worship, if the sadhak has true devotion, purity, good intentions, and patience. The sadhak is free to choose a deity or yantra, whichever triggers him or her emotionally. The next step is to find a teacher. Anyone who is emotionally and practically involved in Tantra worship is competent to become a teacher. Tantra is a method, a technique, a path—and one who is on the path can lead others, or lead them to his or her own teacher.

The selection of a Guru—a great task in itself—is followed by initiation and learning the techniques. In Tantra there are three different schools (see Table 11).

Samaya Mat is the ancient path of worship. Vedic in orgin, it believes in sacrifice and penance.

Kaul Mat is the path of heroes. Those who can face challenges and remain balanced and centered can enjoy both yoga and *bhoga* (sensual enjoyment). Desires should be fulfilled, and a state of having no desire except the desire

for union should be achieved. Bhoga is used as an instrument for yoga.

A *kaul* is an evolved being who dwells in nondual consciousness and a constant state of awareness. His *madya* (liquor) is *amrita (soma)* dripping from Som Chakra. To him *mans* (meat) is his anger, greed, and attachment. *Matsya* (fish) is taste, egoity, pride, avarice. *Mudra* (money) is hope, seeking, anxiety, fear, jealousy, shyness, envy. *Maithuna* (sexual communion) is the union of Kundalini with Shiva. This is the real Panch Makar Sadhana of a kaul.

Mishra Mat, the mixed path, combines Yoga, tapas, and mantra. Local customs and tribal rituals are also included to ensure the emotional involvement of the aspirant. According to this school the intoxication that comes by knowledge is liquor; the silence that comes by sadhana is meat; the stopping of the constant floating in Ganga and Yamuna (ida and pingala) is eating the fish; the precious achievement of experience and knowledge is money; and the union of nada and bindu is sexual communion.

Whatever path the aspirant may follow, certain requirements are common.

OBJECTS FOR RITUAL WORSHIP

- An altar
- An asana (seat) for the deity or yantra, or both
- An image (idol) of the deity or a yantra, or both
- An asana for the aspirant
- A water pot, made of gold, silver, or copper, for offering water
- A mala
- A bell
- Scents for offering to the deity
- Cloth for the deity
- Jewelry for the deity

- Flowers
- Incense
- Sweet of any kind for offering as food
- Sandalwood paste
- A mixture of yogurt with honey and cream or ghee

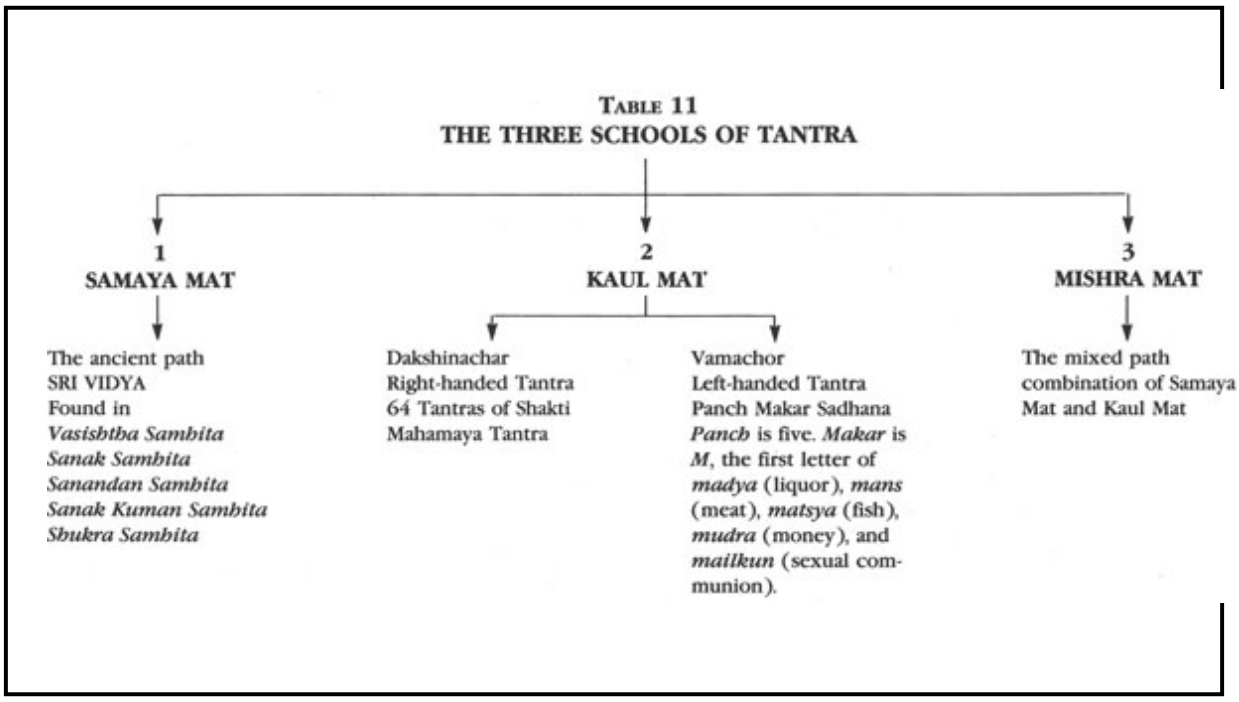


TABLE 11
THE THREE SCHOOLS OF TANTRA

1 SAMAYA MAT	2 KAUL MAT		3 MISHRA MAT
The ancient path SRI VIDYA Found in *Vasishtha Samhita* *Sanak Samhita* *Sanandan Samhita* *Sanak Kuman Samhita* *Shukra Samhita*	Dakshinachar Right-handed Tantra 64 Tantras of Shakti Mahamaya Tantra	Vamachor Left-handed Tantra Panch Makar Sadhana *Panch* is five. *Makar* is *M*, the first letter of *madya* (liquor), *mans* (meat), *matsya* (fish), *mudra* (money), and *mailkun* (sexual communion).	The mixed path combination of Samaya Mat and Kaul Mat

The aspirant should not use any tailored cloth or stitched cloth. A yellow, red, or white dhoti or sari is prescribed. If nothing is mentioned about the color of the cloth, a yellow cloth can be safely used.

The worship should begin with purification, which creates an electrochemical balance in the body and thus prepares it for worship. Generally purification means cleansing of the body. If the digestive tract and the lower abdominal tract are not clean, the sadhana can bring adverse effects. Cleansing means not only taking a bath or washing face, hands, and feet. Purification is cleansing in the complete sense: the purification of the lower abdominal tract and body, of the various psychic points in the body, of the place of worship (in which water is sprinkled over the floor and in all directions), and of the altar. Then the asana for the sadhak is

laid down and purified by reciting the purification mantra and sprinkling water to generate more pranic negative ions in the atmosphere. Ganesha Mantra is recited next. Then the sadhak recites the mantra for the salutation to the god or goddess who is being invoked. Then the sadhak "fences the ten quarters," a protective ritual called *dikbandhan.* The sadhak does this by striking the earth three times with the left foot, saying the bija mantra PHAT, clapping, and snapping the fingers twice while moving them in a circular motion around the head.

Then the sadhak performs pranayama, and the elements of the body are purified. Next comes *nyasa.* The word *nyasa* means "to place." The fingertips and the palm of the right hand are placed on various parts of the body while uttering certain mantras. First comes Rishi Nyasa or invoking of the rishi who originated the mantra being used, then Anganyasa (body organs), Karanyasa (fingertips), Hridyanyasa (heart), Pilknyasa (psychic centers), and Bijnyasa (throat, third eye, and head)—known as six kinds of nyasa (*khadnyasa*). Then comes meditation on the form of the deity or yantra, then Panchopchar, or worship done by five (*punch*) articles (*opchar*):

1. Gandha—Smell—Earth
2. Naivedya—Taste—Water
3. Dip—Lamp—Fire
4. Dhup—Incense—Air
5. Pushp—Flowers—Akasha

Then comes Manas Puja (offerings made mentally) and meditation. Then comes the reciting of various names, mantra japa, and finally the recital *of kavach* (armor), which brings protection. Kavach is supposed to be the essence of worship; without reciting kavach, the full benefit of a worship cannot be obtained.

Another method of worship is Shodashopchar, or worship done by sixteen *(shodash)* articles *(opcbar):*

1. Swagat—Welcoming the deity by chanting mantra
2. Asana—Offering the seat while uttering mantra
3. Padya—Washing the feet of the deity while reciting mantra
4. Arghya—Offering of uncooked rice flowers, sandalwood paste, and turmeric as roli with durva grass
5. Achman—Offering of water twice while reciting mantra
6. Achman—Again, an offering of water twice while reciting mantra
7. Madhupark—The deity is offered a cup of yogurt mixed with a tablespoon of honey and a spoonful of cream or ghee.
8. Snana—The deity is offered a bath. Cleansing of the mouth and then bathing are performed.
9. Vasana—The deity is offered clothes.
10. Abharana—The deity is offered jewelry.
11. Gandha—The deity is offered scents or sandalwood paste to anoint the body.
12. Pushpa—The offering of flowers is made.
13. Dhup—The deity is offered incense.
14. Dep—The offering of the lamp is made.
15. Naivedya—The deity is offered food.
16. Vandana—Prayer is offered.

After the Shodashopchar worship, the same order of Manas Puja meditation and mantra japa and kavach is done.

If a yantra is to be made before the worship, then it should be made after purification and dik-bandhan. Yantras for worship should be made on copper, silver, or gold (or a mixture of the three, called *triloh*) or written with asthagandha on bhojpatra (birch bark) with a pen made from the branch of a pomegranate tree. If the yantras are to be engraved by a craftsman, he should be purified, and the

plate should be handed over to him after drawing the yantra with asthagandha, or any prescribed ink, which may vary with the nature of the job and worship.

After the yantra is made, it should be worshiped, and the energy of the deity should be invoked by reciting the mantra for Prana Prahishtha. *Prana* is life, and *Prahishtha* is "establishing"; thus, Prana Prahishtha is putting life into the yantra—that is, invoking the deity. Before Prana Prahishtha mantra, the sadhak should recite Ganesha Mantra and meditate on the obstacle-remover Ganesha, so as to achieve the fruits of worship. The Pranapratishtha mantra should be recited next, and then either Panchopchar or Shadashopchar worship can be used.

TABLE 12
MATERIAL OF YANTRAS FOR WORSHIP

Yantra	Material
Kali Yantra	Copper
Tara Yantra	Engraved on birch bark or copper plate, or sculpted in pyramid form
	Ink of ashthagandha
	Pen of the branch of the pomegranate tree
Shodashi Yantra	Triloh (mixture silver, copper, and gold)
	Any semiprecious or precious stone
	Before engraving, the yantra should be drawn with sindoor (mercury oxide) or kumkum (red earth color)
Bhuvaneshwa Yantra	Triloh (mixture silver, copper, and gold)
Bhairavi Yantra	Birch bark or copper plate
Chinnamasta Yantra	Birch bark or copper plate
Dhumavati Yantra	Birch bark or copper plate
Bagla Mukhi Yantra	Gold plate, silver, copper, birch bark
Matangi Yantra	Birch bark, copper, silver

Kamla Yantra	Gold, silver, copper, crystal, birch bark

The use of gems and talismans is also prescribed as an additional aid to worship and for curing the effects of negative planetary aspects.

The next section provides one full ritualistic model of Ganesha worship to illustrate Shodashopchar worship. Worship of Lord Ganesha is one of the unique features of tantric sadhana. The external image of Ganesha is charming and attractive, although not acceptable to the rational mind. Worshiping Ganesha quiets the left hemisphere and enables worship to be performed without obstacles. The greatest of all obstacles is our own doubt, which weakens faith and blocks the path of spiritual evolution.

WORSHIP OF LORD GANESHA

1. Dhyana (Invocation)

GAJANANAM BHOOTGANADISEVITAM
KAPITTHA JAMBOO PHALCHARU
BHAKSHANAM
UMASUTAM SHOKVINASHKARAKAM
NAMAMI VIGHNESHWAR PADPANKAJAM.

Elephant-faced, worshiped by the existing beings, of all living beings, tasting the elephant apple *(kaith)* and jambolana *(jamun),* the Son of Uma, destroyer of grief, I bow to the lotus feet of Ganesha who is lord of all.

2. Avahan (Swagat: Welcoming)

AGUCHCHA JAGADADHAR
SURASURVARARCHIT
ANATHNATH SARVAGYA GEERVAN
PARIPOOJIT.

Please come. Worshiped by both the gods and demons, die lord of helpless persons, omniscient, specially worshiped by gods, and the base as whole

universe.

3. Asana (Seat)

SWARNSINHASANAM DIVYAM
NAUARATNASAMNVTTAM.
SAMARPTIAM MAYA DEVA TATRA TWAM
SAMUPAVISH.

I present the throne studded with multiple jewels. Please be seated on it.

4. Padya (Water for Washing Feet)

DEVDEVESH SARVESH SARVATIRTHAHRITAIM JALAM.
PADYAM GNIHAN GANAP
GANDHPUSHPAKSHA—TAIRYUTAM.

Lord of gods and Lord of all, Ganeshji. Please accept die feet-washing water brought, from all the several places and mixed with fragrant things, unbroken rice, and flowers.

5. Arghya (Offering)

PRAVALMUKTAPHAIAPOOGRATNAM.
TAMBOOL. JAMBOONADAMASHTA GANDHAM.
PUSHPAKSHATAYUKTAMAMO—
GHAHASHAKTE DATTAM MAYARGHYAM.
SAFALIEEKURUSWA.

Please accept arghya water filled with pearl, coral, jewels, gold betel nut, betel (made from leaf and nut of betel plant), fragrant products, flowers, and unbroken rice.

6. Achntan (Cleansing)

GANGADISERVA TIRTHEBYAH PRARTHITAM TOYA MUTTAMAM.
KARPOORAILA LAVANGADI VASITAM SVEEKURU PRABHO.

Please accept the water brought from the Ganga and all the sacred places, scented by camphor, white cardamom, and cloves.

7. Taila (Anointing with Oil)

CHAMPAKASHOK BAKULAMALATI MALLI KADIBHIH.
VASITAM SINGDHTA HETUM TAILAMCHARU PRAGRIHYATAM.

Please accept the oil scented by champa, ashok, jasmine, and bela maulshri flowers for anointing.

8. Dugdha Snana (Milk Bath)

KAMDHENU SAUMDBUTAM SARVESHAM
JEEVANAH PARAM.
PAVANAM YAGNJA HETUM TE PAYAH
SNANARTHAMARPITAM.

Please accept milk for bathing. Produced by Kamdhenu (the celestial cow), giving life for all, created as a purifier by the Lord for sacrificial rites.

9. Dadhisnam (Curd Bath)

DHENUDUGDHA SAMDBHOOTAM SHUDDHAM SURVAGATAM PRTYAM.
MAYANITAM DADHIVARAM SNANARTHAM PRATIGRIHYATAM.

Please accept the curd for bathing, prepared from the milk of the cow and preferred by all.

10. Ghrita Snana (Ghee Bath)

NAVANEET SAMUTPANNAM SARVA SANTOSH BAVANAM.
YATHANGAM DEVATA HARAM GHRITAM SRATUM SAMARPITAM.

Please accept ghee for bathing prepared with butter, all-satisfying and complete food of gods.

11. Madhusnana (Honey Bath)

RAKTASARAGH SAMBHOTAM SARVA
TEJOVIVARADHANAM.
SARVA PUSHTIKARAM DEV MADHU
SNANARTHAMARPITAM.

Please accept the honey for bathing which has been prepared by red bees and which promotes agility and gives energy.

12. Sharkarasnan (Sugar Bath)

IKSHUSAR SAMUDBHOOTAM SHARKARAM SUMAN OH RAM.
MALAPHARINIM SNATUM GRIHAN TUAM MAYARPITAM.

Please accept the fine sugar which has been prepared from an extract of sugar cane and removes filth.

13. Gudasnan (Jaggery Bath)

SARVAMADHURYA TA HETUS SVADUSSARVA PRTYAMKARAH.

PUSHTIKRIT SNATUMANIT IKSHUSURBHAVO GUDAH.

I have brought jaggery [unrefined palm or cane sugar] for bathing, the cause of all sweetness, loved by all, energy-giving, tasty, and extract of sugar cane.

14. Madhuparka (Sweet Offering)

KANSYE KANSYENA PIHITODADHIMADHWA JYA POORITAH.

MADHUPARKO MAYANEETAH PUJARTHAM PRATIGRIHGYATAM.

Please accept *madhuparka* for presentation which is in a bronze pot covered by a bronze cover, mixed with curd, honey, and ghee.

15. Suddhodaka Snana (Clean Water for Bath)

SARVATEERTHAHRITAM TOYAM MAYA PRARTHANAYA VIBHO.

SUVASITAM GRIHANEDAM SAMAK SNATUM SURESHWAR.

Please accept scented water brought from all sacred places for bathing.

16. Vasana (Garment)

RAKTAVASTRA YUGAM DEV LOKALAJJA NIVARNAM.

ANARGHYAMATI SUKSHAM CHA GRIHANEDAM MAYARPITAM.

Please accept two red garments, valuable and fine, removers of shame.

17. Upaveet (Sacred Thread)

RAJATAM BRAHMASOOTRAM KANCHAN RAKTA SANYUTAM.

BHAKTYOPAPADITAM DEV GRIHAN PARMESHWAR

Please accept the sacred thread of silver, along with gold and red color.

18. Bhushan (Abharana: Ornaments)

ANEKRATNA YUKTANI BHOOSHANANI BAHOONICHA.

TATTADANGE KANCHANANI YOJYAMI TAVAGYAYA.

I present you the gold ornaments, studded with gems, to put on different limbs.

19. Gandha (sandal)

ASTH SAMAYUKTAM RAKTA CHANDANMUTTAMAM.

DVADASHANGESHU DEVA LEPYAMI KRIPAM KURU.

Please accept the red sandal mixed with eight fragrant products (asthagandha). I anoint your twelve body points with it: top of head, pineal, eyes, nostrils, ears, throat, back of neck, heart, navel, arms, wrists, and base of spine.

20. Akshat (Rice for Sprinkling)

RAKTA CHANDAN SAMISHRAN STANDULAS TILAKOPARI.
SHOBHAYAI SAMPRADASYAMI GRIH AN PARMESHWAR.

Please accept for beauty the unbroken rice and sesame mixed with red sandal.

21. Pushpa (Flowers)

PATALAM KARNIKARAM-CHA
BANDHUKAM RAKTA PANKAJAM.
MOGARAM MALATI PUSHPAM
GRIHAN SUMANOHARAM.

Please accept the beautiful flowers of rose of Kaner, dupaharia, pink lotus, bela, and jasmine.

22. Dhup (Incense)

DASANG GUGGULAM DHOOPAM SARVA SAN-GANDHYA KARKAM.
SARVA PAPA KSHAYA KARAM TVAM GRIHAM MAYARPITAM.

Please accept the incense of ten fragrant things with the resinous *guggulu* incense that washes away sins.

23. Dip (Lamp)

SARVAGYA SARVA LOKESH
TAMONASHAN—UTTAMAM.
GRIHAN MANGALAM DEEP DEV DEV
NAMOSTUTE.

I bow to thee. Please accept the lamp, remover of darkness, omniscient one, and Lord of the Universe.

24. Naivedya (Meal)

NANA VYANJAN SHOBHADDHYAM
SHALYODANA-MANUTTAMAM.
DADHI DUGDHAGHRITAI RYUKTAM
LAVANGAILA SAMANVITAM.

MARICHICURNA SAHITA KVATHIKA
VATAKANVITAM.
RAJIKADHANYA SANYUKTAMS
METHIPISHTAM SATAKRAKAM.
HINGU JIRAKA KUSHMANDAM MARICHI
MASHPISHTAKAIH.
SAMPADITAIH SUPAKVESHASHCHA
BHARJITAIR VATAKAIRTAM.
MODAKAPOOP LADDOOK SHASHKULI
MANDAKADIBHIH.
PARPATAI RAPI SANYUK TAM NAP/EDYAM
AMRITAVNITAM.
HARIDRA HINGU LAVAN SAHITAM
SOOPUTTAMAM.
SASAMUDRAM GRIHANEDAM BHOJANAM
KURU SADARAM.

Please accept the food—*khir* (rice and milk), sugar, rice, curd, milk, ghee; *karhi* (thick soup made with buttermilk) prepared by cloves, cardamom, and peppers; *batika* prepared by *vai* (rape seed), *dhania* (coriander), *methi* (fenugreek), asfoetida, jira (cumin), peppers, gourd, and paste of *urad; modak* (sweet balls made of chick-pea flour), *pupa, laddoo, puri, math* (beans), and *pappad* and tasty things; pulses prepared with turmeric, asfoetida, salt, and sea salt. Please accept all these things.

ACHAMAN—SUTRAPTI KARAKAM TOYAM SUGANDHAM CHA PIBECHCHAYA. TVAYI TRIPLE JAGATTRIPTAM NITY A TRIPTE MAHATMANI UTTARAPOSHANARTHAM TE DADAMI TOYAM SUVASITAM. MUKH PANI VISHUDHYARTHAM PUNAS TOYAM DADAMI.

Please drink scented water, all-satisfying. The whole world is satisfied when you satisfy.

25. Phal (Fruit)

DADIMAN. MADHURAM NIMBU JAMBVAMRA PANASADIKAM.
DRAKSHA RAMBHAFALAM PAKVAM
KARKANDHOOH KHARJOORAM FALAM.
NARIKELAM CHA NARTNGAM ANJIRAM JAMBIRAM TATHA.
URVARUKAM CHA DEVESH PHAIANYETANI GRIHYATAM.

O Lord of Gods, please accept these fruits—pomegranate, sweet citron, lemon, jambolana, mango, jackfruit, grapes, well-ripened bananas, jujube *(ber),* dates, coconut, oranges, figs, citron, and musk fruit.

26. Achaman and Karodvartama (Water and Powder for Washing Hands)

ACHAMAN—MUKHPANI VISUDHYARTHAM.

PUNASTOYAM DADAMI TE. GRIHAN

CHANDAN CHARU KARANGODVARTANAM

SHUBHAM. NANA PARIMAL DRAVYAIR

NIRMITAM CHURNAMUTTAMAM.

SUGANDHI NANAKAM PUNYAGANDHI CHARU PRAGRIHYATAM.

1 again give you water to wash moudi and hands. Please accept sandal paste along with fragrant powder to rub your hands with.

27. Sindoor (Vermilion, Mercury Oxide)

CHARU SHALOOR SAMBHOOTAM VANSHSAR SAMUDBHAVAM

SEEMANT BHOOSHANAM CHOORNAM LAKSHA RANJITMASTUTE.

Prepared with shaloor and calcium obtained from bamboo *(bansh lochari)* and with lacquer. Please accept this red paste upon your head.

28. Tambool (Betel Leaf)

SACHANDRA POOG CHOORNADHYAM

KHADYA KHADIR SANYUTAM

ELALAVANG SAMMISHRAM

TAMBOOLAM KESHARANVITAM.

Please accept the rolled betel leaf full of camphor, betel nut powder, *katechu* (bark extract), white cardamom, clove, and saffron.

29. Dravya (Presenting of Coin)

NYUNATIRIKTA PUJAYAH SAMPURNA

FALHETAVE DAKSHINAM

KANCHANIM DEV STHAPYAMI TAVAGRATAH.

I present you with the gold coin to fulfill whatever has been overlooked in the worship.

30. Mala (Garland)

SITPEETAISTATHA RAKTAIR JALAJAI KASUMAIH SHUBHAIH.

GRATHITAM SUNDARAM MALA GRIHAN PARMESHWAR.

Please accept the beautiful garland prepared with white, yellow, pink, and red lotuses and other flowers.

31. Durva (A Kind of Grass)

HARITAH SVETVARNA VA PANCH TRIPATRA
SANYUTA DOORVANKURA
MAYA DATTA EKVINSHATI SAMMATAH.

I present to you twenty-one tufts of two- or three-leaved durva grass.

32. Pradakshina (Moving Around the Idol or God)

EKEVINSHANTISANKHYAKAH KURYAM DEV PRADAKSHINAH.
PADE PADE TE DEVESH NASHYAUTU PATKANI ME.

I go twenty-one times around you. Please wash away my sins at every step.

33. Arartikam (Lamp of Many Wicks)

AUDUMBARE RAJATE VA KANSYE KANCHAN SAMBHAVE. PATRO PRAKALPITAM DEEPAM GRIHAN CHAKSHURARPAKAM.
PANCHARATIR PANCHDEEPAIRDEEPITAM PARMESHWAR,
CHARUCHANDRANIBHAM DEEPAM GRIHAN VICHIVARANAM. YATHASYA NAKSHYATE BASHMA TATHA PAPAM VINASHAYA.

Please accept the lamp placed on Indian fig *(gular),* with silver, bronze, or golden pot, which gives light to die eyes, prepared with five wicks. The five lamps are like the moon, dispeller of difficulties. Please ward off my sins as I touch the ash of this.

After this Shodashopchar worship, the Tantric worship of nyasa follows, and finally comes the prayer, meditation, and japa. The Tantric worship finishes with the recital of kavach.

Footnotes

CHAPTER ONE

What is Tantra?

1. Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Ballantine, 1985), 276-277.
2. Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds: A Buddhist Pilgrim in Tibet* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1966).
3. Op cit.
4. Swami Rajeswarananda, *Thus Spake Ramana* (Madras: Weldun Press, 1985).
5. R. Tagore, *Gitanjali* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).
6. For more information, see Harish Johari, *Dhanwan-tari* (San Francisco: Rams Head, 1974).

About the Author

Harish Johari (1934-1999) was a distinguished North Indian author, Tantric scholar, poet, musician, composer, artist, and gemologist who held degrees in philosophy and literature and made it his life's work to introduce the culture of his homeland to the West.

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